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ABSTRACT

This journal includes five papers: "The Co-Occurrence of Quotatives with Mimetic Performances" (Isabelle Buchstaller); "'Who Does She Think She Is?' Constraints on Autonomy in Language Teacher Education" (Anne Heller-Murphy and Joy Northcott); "Effects of Feedback on Performance: A Study of Advanced Learners on an ESP Course" (Tony Lynch and Joan Maclean); "Learner Diary Research with 'Cambridge' Examination Candidates" (Brian Parkinson, Cathy Benson, and Michael Jenkins); and "A Discussion of Language Tables from the 2000 Population Census of Mauritius" (Aaliya Rajah-Carrim). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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# EDINBURGH WORKING PAPERS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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## Preface

**EWPAL** provides a (normally) annual update on some of the work being carried out in applied linguistics and language pedagogy by students and staff of the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (TAAL) and Institute for Applied Language Studies (IALS), both in the University of Edinburgh. This issue includes one article each on discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, and three relating to language teaching/learning (including teacher development).

As usual I should like to thank the readers/referees who have found time to comment on articles submitted: Cathy Benson, Joseph Gafaranga, Eric Glendinning, Aileen Irvine, John Joseph, Miriam Meyerhoff and Hugh Trappes-Lomax.

Thanks also go to Ann Rattray for turning contributors' 'final' versions into these published papers, and to Alan White and his colleagues at the University Printing Office, who have dealt with the final stage of production.

Brian Parkinson

January 2003

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Contributors' and editor's addresses appear at the end of this volume.

# THE CO-OCCURRENCE OF QUOTATIVES WITH MIMETIC PERFORMANCES

**Isabelle Buchstaller (TAAL)**

*Abstract*

*This article undertakes a study of the co-occurrence of different verbs of quotation with mimesis. Drawing from a corpus of spoken American English, it shows that the new quotatives[1] are primarily used to enquote mimetic enactment.* Think, *hitherto the primary item for the enquoting of inner monologue, is not used much for mimetic enactment. It will be shown that it is* be like *and* go*'s non-commitment to the realization of the quoted speech/thought that makes them good introductory items for mimesis. Furthermore, it will be argued that it is due to their newcomer and still marked status that speakers prefer the new quotatives as introductory items for more expressive quotes.*

## 1. Introduction

The notion of mimesis can be traced back to Plato (Book III of the *Republic*). It has been taken up by Goffman (1981), Wierzbicka (1974) in her 'quotations as performance' approach, and more recently by Clark and Gerrig (1990). In this approach, quotes are regarded as demonstrations; quoting is 'playing someone's part'. The enquoting person 'does not say what the content of the quote is (i.e. what was said), instead he does something that enables the hearer to SEE for himself what it is, that is to say, in a way, he *shows* this content' (Clark and Gerrig 1990:802). The literature lists several reasons for the incorporation of mimetic performances: to convey a more emotion-based rather than factual rendering in order to reveal how the speakers felt in and perceived the situation; to add more vividness, which is supposed to lead to audience involvement (Blyth 1991); and to superimpose internal evaluation without having to step outside the quotation frame (Labov 1972).

Mimesis is understood as direct representation, the total imitation of the event. In contrast, diegesis is summarized representation, a mere synthesis of the original event. The extremes of these modes can be illustrated by a rendering of an original event where we hear only the reportee's voice, or – conversely – are given a report of the event through the reporter's voice[2]. Consequently, the difference between mimesis and diegesis is between showing and describing, dramatic and descriptive, between reporting the 'how' and the 'what' of the original speech event.

But even though the claim holds in theory that these modes of representation are to be fundamentally kept apart, in everyday talk-in-interaction the boundaries between them are fluid and creatively exploited by speakers. Pure direct reported discourse is a hybrid form of rendering past speech events as direct speech and can incorporate 'delivery aspects' (Clark and Gerrig 1990), such as voice effects, gestures, inarticulate sounds etc. or even consist

entirely of them. The two modes of quoting can thus be considered as two scalar perspectives on a continuum[3] (Yule 1993:236, Güldemann 2001).

## 2. Data

This paper discusses the co-occurrence of quotative verbs with mimetic enactment based on 2 corpora of US American English, both available through the University of Pennsylvania Data Consortium. The Switchboard Corpus has a speaker number of 542 ranging from age 20 to age 60; the speakers were sociolinguistically tagged with respect to educational level and provenance from one of 7 main dialect areas within the US. The Santa Barbara Corpus of spoken English has a speaker number of 52, age 17 to 70, coded with respect to educational level and home state. Overall, the corpus includes tape recordings from 1988 to 1995.

As mimesis, the display of 'what has been done before', is synergic and can involve auditory, gestural, and facial activity, all aspects of mimetic enactment to be revealed on an auditive or contextual basis[4] were counted. Thus, for the purposes of the study, coding as [+mimesis] implies the occurrence of voice and/or sound effects of all sorts, and gesture, where it could be retrieved from audience reactions.

## 3. Findings

The following table gives an overview of the co-occurrence of mimesis with the most important verbs of quotation in US American English.

Table 1: Co-occurrence of quotatives with mimesis[5]

| mimesis | % | Number |
|---|---|---|
| go | 76 | 132 |
| like | 69 | 159 |
| say | 42 | 50 |
| think | 20 | 21 |

$\chi^2$ (df 3): 110.634, $p<0.001$

Table 1 yields the following conclusions: Firstly, the $\chi^2$ statistic shows that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the occurrences of mimesis with quotative verbs but not where exactly this significant difference lies. For further discussion and ANOVA results, consider Table 3, below.

The verb *go* is most frequently used to enquote mimetic enactment (76%) (Butters 1980, Schourup 1982a, Tannen 1986, Yule and Mathis 1992). But *be like* is used almost as often for the enquoting of mimetic performances (69%). Only 42% of the tokens of the most frequent dialogue introducer, *say*, co-occur with mimetic performances.

*Think* co-occurs even less with mimesis. This is quite surprising in view of the fact that *think* enquotes inner monologue, opinion, attitude, and point-of-view. Chafe (1994) and Goffman (1981) have shown that such inner speech is often high in emotion, and therefore more likely to be rendered in vivid, emotionally heightened speech. My data suggests, though, that when hypothetical speech is enquoted by *think*, it is not often accompanied by mimetic effects. Why are such quotes not rendered via re-enactment, mimesis?

## 4. Discussion

At this point, I would like to introduce two indices, which I will use throughout this paper: I define $S_0$ as the point in time of the initial mental/verbal activity and $S_1$ as the interactive rendering of the speech act/thought between the interlocutors. Thus, when speaker A tells his brother at $S_0$, Christmas Day, *I forgot to buy you a present*, this speech act can be rendered at any given $S_1$, say, when A is chatting to his buddy B on New Year's Eve, as *I said "I forgot to buy you a present"*.

Conversely, if speaker A thought at $S_0$, *damn, I forgot to buy him a present*, this can be rendered at $S_1$ as *I thought "damn, I forgot to buy him a present"*.

From the above it should become clear that the difference between reported inner monologue (henceforth hypothetical reported speech) and reported real occurring speech is their (non-) wording in $S_0$. Real occurring reported speech has been realized in $S_0$. Hypothetical reported speech might or might not have been realized in $S_0$ – A might have mumbled *damn...* or even screamed it inwardly with anger. But both - hypothetical as well as real occurring reported speech - are uttered aloud in $S_1$, the actual quote.

Let us now consider the co-occurrence of quotatives with real and hypothetical speech events:

Table 2: Distribution of degrees of hypotheticality (in %) per all quotatives[6]

| | real | hypothetical |
|---|---|---|
| say | 52 | 7 |
| go | 45 | 17 |
| like | 22 | 28 |
| think | 0 | 51 |

$\chi^2$ (df 15): 223.063, $p < 0.001$

First, I will only discuss the findings for *think*. I will return to the full results below. 51% of all quotes with *think* enquote hypothetical reported speech. Note that *think* does not co-occur with real occurring speech acts.

Thus, my data show that quotes framed with *think* have - in all likelihood - not been uttered out loud in $S_0$ but are a rendering of what was going on in the mind of the reportee, as is illustrated in Example 1 (cf. also Buchstaller, in preparation).

Example 1 Participating in an experiment

B: oh okay right I work for TI so
we saw it on the uh the T[V]- news one day
→ and I **thought** "*wow* that might be *interesting*"
A: yeah
yeah we sort of different
B: yeah

Here, *wow that might be interesting* is speaker B's attitude at the point in time ($S_0$) he saw the news and heard about the call-in experiment. Speaking to A in $S_1$, B represents his point of view at $S_0$ as a quote framed by *I thought*. What was going on in his mind at the time, the fact that he found the idea interesting, is rendered via a conventional sound for positive amazement, *wow*.

When evaluation, point-of-view, and attitude are enquoted, they are often rendered as mimetic enactment (consider also sounds such as *ahhh!*, *gosh* as in Example 3, or *blimey*). Such, often conventionalised, sounds, voice qualities, or gestures have concentrated semantic reference – any attempt to render them in words would be lengthy and necessarily imprecise. The speaker's opinion is rendered via mimesis, which constitutes a short, concise representation of her mental state at that point. Consequently, inner, hypothetical speech is often clad in a more expressive form than just words. Consider the next 2 examples:

Example 2 Being offered Indian sweets

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | A: | she had brought Indian sweets into the office |
| | | and it was really funny because they were made from yogurt and carrots |
| | B: | urg |
| → | A: | yeah that was a sweet and **I was like** '*u::rgh*' ha ha [ ha ha |
| | B: | [o ha ha ha ha |
| | A: | 'this is a sweet ? |
| | | Oh it is |
| | | it's a candy' |
| → | | **I'm like** '*urgh*' you know 'Indian candy is not very good' |
| | B: | right |
| | A: | but everything was and everything |
| | | you didn't notice at first but everything was sort of hot |

In the above transcript, speaker A describes his disgust at the sweets he was offered by an officemate. The turns marked by the arrows contain sounds expressing his attitude towards the candy, *urgh*. Face considerations would have forbidden the blunt rendering of his negative evaluation: it is pragmatically unlikely that speaker A outwardly uttered *urgh* to his colleague. If we assume that he probably did not, the quotes marked by an arrow feature hypothetical speech – attitude, evaluation at the moment of $S_0$, rendered as a mimetic quote at $S_1$. But nothing in the context makes clear whether the content of the quotes was actually spoken aloud or not – whether this quote is inner monologue or interactively realized speech. Consider also Example 3.

Example 3 A family reunion where more and more relatives show up

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | A: | no it was all in the San Antonio Area |
| | B: | well sometimes |
| | A: | but it kept growing and growing and growing and growing |
| → | | and **we're going** '*oh my gosh*' |
| | | so |
| | B: | well you have you have the families lives close together |
| | | to see each other often |
| | A: | uh huh basically |

Here again, attitude is rendered as quoted sound – mimetic enactment. Speaker A re-enacts the shock she felt at $S_0$ via a sound with conventional value, *gosh*.

This phenomenon, the expression of inner states via sounds, is reminiscent of Goffman's (1981:114) 'response cries', whose purpose he defines as 'to show or index the mental states of their transmitters' and to 'clarify the drama of their circumstances'. Goffman also makes clear that it is not their occurrence or non-occurrence that matters but the fact that they are closely tied to the inner states at the moment that they occur. Especially when no interlocutor

is present, it is impossible to tell whether the words/sounds were uttered or merely inward - and even less whether they were heard or not.

The difference between hypothetical reported speech and response cries is merely in timing, for Goffman's response cries co-occurring with the mental states they are supposed to index. Hypothetical quotes have exactly the same function, but are temporally removed from the emotions they are indexing. There is a temporal lapse between the moment of the mental state, $S_0$, and the indexing in $S_1$.

Also, hypothetical quotes need not assume the same form as response cries. As the $S_0$ and $S_1$ are removed in time, the reporters - freed of the immediacy of their emotions - can attempt to put into words the emotions felt in $S_0$.

This can be seen in Example 2, where *urgh* co-occurs with *Indian candy is not very good*. Thus, when re-enacting previous mental states, speakers are free to choose to render them as purely mimetic, as sound and speech as in Example 2 (*urgh Indian candy is not very good*), or even without any mimetic enactment.

Notice that the in last two examples, the quotes featuring hypothetical speech expressed in 'response cries' are enquoted by *be like* and *go*. Indeed, Table 1 shows that it is not often *think* that is used as an introductory item for mimesis, it is rather *go* or *be like* that enquote such re-enactment.

It is now time to come back to our original question. Why does *think* not function in line with the overall finding that inner monologue is often cast in mimetic re-enactment when rendered interactively as a quote? Why then is hypothetical reported speech framed by *think* not rendered via mimesis?

I propose the following explanation: *Think* spells out that the speech act is inward, not uttered aloud, not interactively realized. In contrast, quotatives such as *be like* and *go* leave the question of the speech event's production in $S_0$ entirely open.

If we go back to Table 2, we see that, as expected, *say* is used most frequently with the real occurring speech.

*Say* spells out that the quote was actually physically uttered aloud[7]. The next most frequent quotative to be employed with real occurring speech is *go*, then *be like*, then *think*.

Thus, when it comes to the enquoting of hypothetical speech, *go* and *like* are in the middle field[8]. They can be used for reporting real occurring speech as well as for hypothetical speech, 'verbally uncommitted thought' (Chafe 1994:245). They thus function as a hedge as they do not commit the speaker to the actual occurrence of the speech act in the way *say* does, and so differ from *think*, which usually refers to inner monologue (attitudes, opinions etc.) and is <u>not</u> used for actually occurring speech. They do not commit themselves to lower epistemic spheres either.

My claim is that speakers using *go* and *like* play with this indeterminacy between speech and thought. The new quotatives operate in the grey area between real occurring and hypothetical reported speech, both of which they can introduce (*be like* 45 % and 17%, *go* 22% and 28% respectively). Speakers creatively exploit this fact. Using the new quotatives, they quote as if

they were reproducing a real speech act but package it in a more expressive form, in sound and voice effects.

This suggests that speakers take advantage of the full creative possibilities the language offers them in the new quotatives: a stream-of-consciousness-like display of inner states and attitudes realized in vivid, immediate speech.

*Be like* and *go* have introduced this quotative style into the spoken language. It now fills a space within the spectrum of poetic formulae of the spoken register, where indirect free speech, commonly used in writing, is much less an option (Chafe 1994, Romaine and Lange 1991, Kleewitz and Couper-Kuhlen 1999) and where the theatrical topos of soliloquy did not take on (Ferrara and Bell 1995).

In contrast to *think*, *be like* and *go* theatricalize inner speech by outwardly displaying it as vivid, emotionally heightened output. And in contrast to *say*, they do not pin down a quote as to its hypotheticality level.

Looking at an ANOVA post-hoc test significance table yields the following results:

Table 3: ANOVA post-hoc

| Significance: | like-go | like-say | like-think | go-say | go-think | say-think |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0.549 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.001 |

F(df 5): 36.337, $p < 0.001$

This result ties in with Table 1, where an overall significance has been shown for the correlation of quotatives with mimesis ($\chi^2$ (df3): 110.634, $p < 0.001$). In Table 3, the ANOVA statistic shows that the difference between *be like* and *go* as mimesis introductory items is not significant. A p-value well above 0.05 shows that their function with respect to mimetic enactment is not notably different. Both can be used to enquote sound, gestures, and voice effects. But note that the differences between *go* and *say/think* and between *be like* and *say/think* are highly significant (for all $p < 0.001$). Compared to *say* and *think*, *be like* and *go* have a significantly different correlation with mimesis. Table 1 shows that their correlation is higher (*go* 76%, *be like* 69%, *say* 42%, *think* 20%).

Thus, the newly grammaticalized quotatives *go* and *be like* are distinguished from the old quotatives *say* and *think* by their function as mimesis markers.

*Be like* and *go* are still newcomers within the quotative complex[9] and still stylistically marked as such (Underhill 1988, Butters 1980, 1982, Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). Pertaining to the immediacy of the spoken register and associated with youth speak, they have become associated with the expression of dramatically heightened narration (Romaine and Lange 1991, Ferrara and Bell 1995). They thus have become the prevalent items for the dramatic demonstration of emotionally salient events in sounds, voice, or gestural effects.

Following Güldemann (2001) and Yule and Mathis (1992), we can claim that in US English, where *say* and *think* foreground the semantics, the propositional content of the (inner) quote, *be like* and *go* highlight the 'how', the demonstrative-enacted side of the material.

## 5. Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that *be like* and *go* are synchronically used as quotative items for mimetic performances in contrast to the older quotative devices, *say* and *think*. It gives two explanations as to why speakers choose to enquote such expressive speech events with *be like* and *go*.

1) Quotes containing mimetic enactment most frequently express attitude, evaluation, and point of view. These categories fall into the epistemic level I have termed hypothetical. As *be like* and *go* are uncommitted to the epistemic stance of the quote and do not pin down the speech event to its realization, they are the ideal introductory items for hypothetical quotes.

2) As newcomers to the pool of quotative introductory items, *be like* and *go* still have a stylistically marked status. Speakers choose them as focus quotatives, to introduce quotes with emotionally-heightened material rendered by mimetic enactment.

These findings show that, in US English, *be like* and *go* are not vacuous, parasitic items within a stable pool of quotative devices (cf. Buchstaller, 2001), but rather that they have taken on quite novel functions with respect to mimetic enactments. Speakers creatively exploit the additions to a previously inert paradigm and choose to use them for certain types of quotes. This underlines the claim that we indeed have to count *be like* and *go* as full members of the pool of possibilities of introducing reported speech and thought, where they do their fair share of work: introducing mimetic enactment and quotes with undetermined epistemic levels.

**Appendix**: Transcription Conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| carriage return | intonation unit |
| [ | overlap |
| = | quick, immediate connection of new turns or single units |
| (.) | micro-pause |
| :::: | lengthening, according to its duration |
| ( ) | unintelligible passage, according to its duration |
| accent | primary or main accent |
| *italics* | voice or sound effects |
| ' ' | signals for start and end of quote |
| @ | laughter |

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## Notes

[1] Throughout this article, I will use the term 'new quotatives' for the newly grammaticalized verbs of quotation *go* and *be like*. In this usage, I follow the literature which points out that those new quotatives - albeit new only in comparison to their much older colleagues - have taken on functions traditionally only served by a closed set of verbs such as *to say, to scream,* etc. Due to *be all*'s seeming confinement to California and (to a certain extent) New York English (Singler 2001), I will not include it here.

[2] These extremes are claimed to exist in their purest form in direct and indirect discourse, respectively. But Klewitz and Couper-Kuhlen in their 1999 study showed that the borderline between direct and indirect discourse has to be reconsidered. They falsify the age-old claim that the occurrence of mimesis is a defining criterion for a quote to be direct. Given their results, mimesis can and does occur both in indirect, and direct quotes. In this study, I will only be concerned with direct quotes, which I define via deictic criteria: a direct quote is a quote rendered from the point of view of the reportee in terms of temporal, spatial, and person orientation.

[3] As one anonymous reviewer commented, if I assume the notion of mimesis to be scalar, it should be possible to quantify a quote's mimetic value, or at least to position a quote with respect to its placement on such a scale. Quotes with only voice effect should then count as less mimetic than quotes with voice and gestural effect. While this is an important fact to mention and does deserve investigation, I have not included any measurement of a mimesis coefficient in this study. I would merely like to point out that mimesis is a scalar, multi-value phenomenon and that its mere non-/occurrence does not constitute an *a priori* criterion for a quote to be direct or indirect.

[4] As my corpus is recorded on audio tapes, I could only rely on the following cues to detect mimesis: when the re-enactment consisted of noticeable voice/sound effects, or when bodily movement caused noise of some sort, or when the context clearly indicated the presence of mimesis. These contextual cues could be twofold: either the other speaker commented on the mimetic re-enactment, or if an auditorily empty quote triggered some sort of response from the interlocuter, such as laughter.

[5] The numbers in this table can be explicated as follows: Within my corpus, I extracted all occurrences of *be like* and *go*, 230 and 173 respectively. *Say* and *think* were used as a comparison group – 119 random tokens of *say* and 95 of *think* have been extracted and tagged (those numbers are slightly odd because I did not want to pull apart sequences of coherent quotes). Thus, in Table 1, the percentages pertain to the overall occurrences of the respective quotative. For *go*, 132 out of all 173 tokens, that is 76 %, were used with mimesis. For *say*, 50 out of 119, that is 42% were used with mimesis.

[6] Note that the percentages of this table do not add up to 100%. This is due to the fact that this table only contains a simplified version of the whole range of epistemic levels quotatives can enquote. For a full table see Buchstaller (2001).

[7] I am aware that this is a simplification, and indeed my corpus contains 7% occurrences of *say* with hypothetical speech (cf. table 2). We nevertheless find a highly significant tendency for *say* to co-occur with real occurring speech, and its semantics explain why.

[8] Notice that, of the new quotatives, *go* is used more for the higher epistemic stances; it occurs more frequently with interactively realized speech (in $S_0$). This fact has important implications for the interaction within the functional category 'quotatives' and the partitioning of the functional load therewithin.

[9] To be precise, the first mention of *be like* in quotative function was in 1982 by Butters. *Go* was first mentioned in 1980 by the same author.

# "WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS?" CONSTRAINTS ON AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

**Anne Heller-Murphy & Joy Northcott (IALS)**

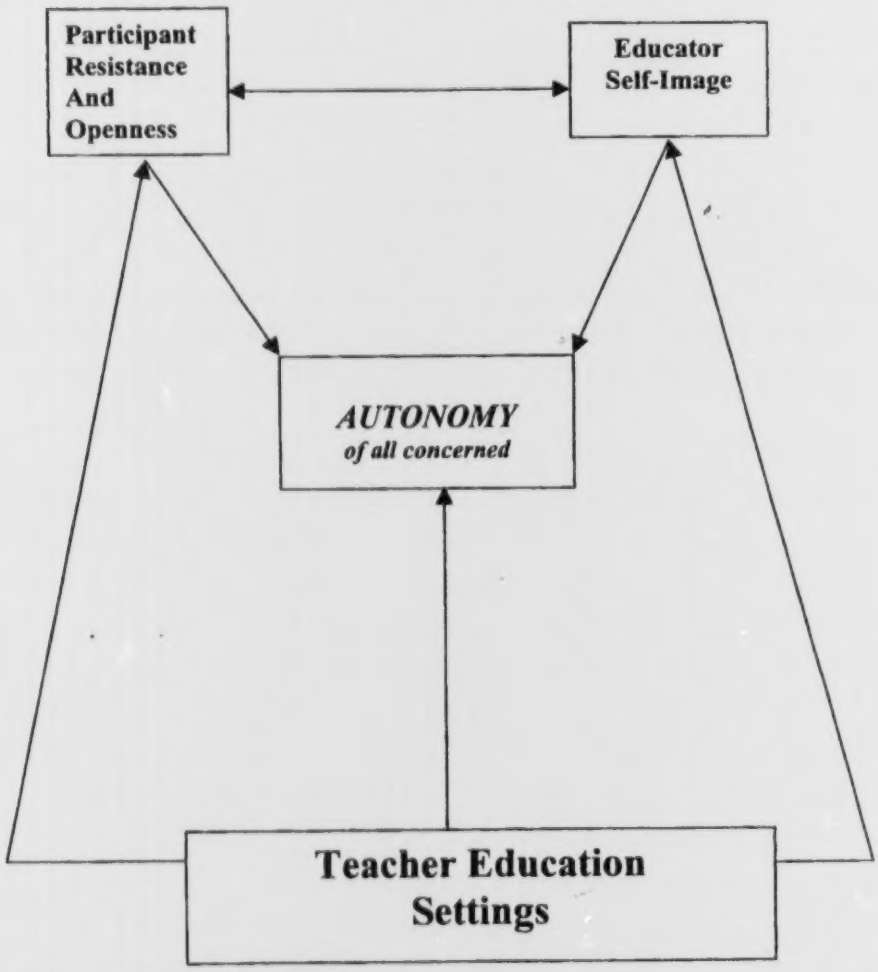
*Abstract*

*This paper reports work in progress. The various settings in which language teacher education takes place can affect the autonomy of all the participants in the process - teacher educators, teachers and trainee teachers. A model was devised which we hope will help teacher educators understand the various possible effects. First, the context from which the model arose is described. Focusing on this context, we then discuss questions raised by the model in relation to issues raised in the literatures of both teacher education and autonomy. Finally, we outline the conclusions reached so far, and suggest areas which we feel would justify further exploration.*

## 1. The Context

Although working together on this paper, the writers' roles at the Institute for Applied Language Studies are different: as acting head of the Teacher Education Section, Joy Northcott is engaged for much of her working life in teacher education; as Development Co-ordinator for Self Access, Anne Heller-Murphy's involvement with teacher education is more sporadic. However, one major point of overlap is in our responsibility towards our colleagues: on the one side in providing expertise and advice on the design and running of Teacher Education courses; on the other in providing advice and practical support in the use of the Self Access Centre as a teaching/learning resource. The effect of our roles as 'educators' on our relationship with our colleagues is something that interests (and concerns) us, and in trying to understand it we found ourselves exploring an increasingly dense mass of issues, all related to a central concern with the autonomy of both the 'educator' and the 'participants' in this setting. The model (below) is what evolved as a result of our attempt to make sense of this 'mass'. It is hoped that the model will have potential as a heuristic tool for those hoping to integrate an understanding of autonomy into the design and teaching of sessions and courses for teachers.

***Who does she think she is? A model of the effect of setting on the autonomy of participants to teacher education programmes.***




- Colleague/peer development
- In-service courses (optional/mandatory)
- Pre-service courses (funded/not funded)
- Conference papers
- Consultancies
- Textbook writing
- Publishing a paper

## 2. The Model: an outline

The model's four interconnecting elements each have an impact on the others, and in this paper we attempt to explore the way in which these areas relate to each other

within our particular context. Our starting point is therefore the base of the model: setting. There is a wide variety of settings in which teacher education can take place, e.g. pre-service, in-service; direct teaching or published papers; conferences and consultancies etc, each generating a different set of issues relating to the participants' sense of autonomy. One key issue in most of these settings will be the matter of choice: to what extent have the participants been free to opt in or out of the education process? The particular setting we have chosen to discuss is in-service, in-house, voluntary teacher development sessions run by colleagues, since this is what first provoked our initial discussion and led to the design of the model.

Many people would agree that presenting to one's immediate colleagues is often viewed with some trepidation. One possible reason for such apprehension is the fact that the presenter might be perceived by their colleagues as having undergone a status change, and there may be some difficulty on the part of some of the participants in accepting this. Hence the title of the paper: Who does she think she is? In such a setting, the presenter may begin to question their own self-image as educator, as well as their role and function as teacher educator in relation to their colleagues. In turn, the educator's self-image and the way this is reflected in their actions and approach may have an impact upon the resistance/openness of the participants, as will their attitude towards teacher education in general.

This idea of resistance takes us to the central element of the model: autonomy. It is possible that one's colleagues may feel that their autonomy of thought or their autonomy of action, or indeed both, might in some way be compromised by the teacher education process, and any 'resistance' may be evidence of this. Such feelings are liable to arise if participants feel that attendance at the session is compulsory or at the very least that there is a 'moral obligation' to be there, or if their 'ownership' of the process has not been established. It is likely that only the most closely-knit, collaborative group of teachers will be able always to avoid the negativity that can arise in such contexts, and it is this we hope to minimise.

## 3. The model: a discussion

### 3.1 Autonomy

There would at times appear to be almost as many definitions of autonomy in education as there are people writing and talking about it. Our particular concern here is how ideas about autonomy are relevant to the concerns of language teacher educators, and in what ways the process of teacher education can have an effect on the autonomy of all the participants in that process, particularly where they are colleagues of the 'educator'.

One simple (or apparently simple) definition of autonomy is that it is a basic 'freedom from control by others' (McGrath 2000). It is useful to consider first what this freedom might in fact mean in the context we are considering. An employed person has duties to fulfil in return for their salary, and in the case of teachers this may well include attendance at Teacher Development (TD) sessions and the implementation of certain teaching practices if there is a 'house style'. Having accepted a job, a teacher is presumed to have accepted the terms under which it is offered. However, even if

these terms are not always explicitly stated by the employer, there are likely to be assumptions made about what a good teacher is which govern the selection of staff. If these same staff are offered the chance or required to attend TD sessions, we presume that the institution is hoping for or expecting some change to occur in the teachers' classroom practice, or in their understanding of aspects of pedagogy or language. This being the case, the process by which the focus of a TD session is chosen is significant. If the sessions are mandatory, the content pre-determined and the selection of presenter/educator made by management rather than teaching staff, then there is little in the process that acknowledges the right of the teachers to have a sense of their own autonomy in the sense of 'freedom from control by others'. The mandatory in-service sessions in state primary and secondary schools can be a case in point. One primary teacher, on being asked how they decided what to have in-service sessions on, gave a wry shrug of the shoulders. It is unlikely that the content of such sessions would be successfully absorbed by the participants. In our particular setting, the fact that the teaching staff propose topics for TD sessions gives them some measure of control over the process. The teacher asked to run the session for their colleagues has been part of the same process, and may even in fact have volunteered to run a session. Attendance is not mandatory, placing the responsibility for professional development firmly in the hands of the individual teachers. Thus teachers are to a certain extent autonomous not only in the sense of having 'freedom from control by others' but also in having 'control over [their] own professional development' (McGrath 2000).

Our interest is in the more subtle issue of how (and whether) the autonomy of all the participants is affected even in these apparently encouraging conditions. In our discussions it became evident that most of our concerns were in some way related to the concepts of Educator Self-image or Participant Resistance/Openness.

### 3.2 Educator Self-image

Trainers considering their self-image as a teacher educator may find themselves pondering some of the following issues: the role and function of a teacher educator, the rights and duties of a teacher educator, and their status.

Is it the teacher educator's role to teach, inform, facilitate discussion, raise awareness, inspire change, provoke reaction? The role will, of course, vary with both the setting and the educator: a pre-service course will require more teaching, while an in-service session may be aimed at inspiring change. It will also vary within a course or session: raising the awareness of pre-service primary teachers of factors affecting children's ability to concentrate before teaching them some techniques for maintaining concentration throughout a lesson; informing in-service EFL teachers of changes to exams which will affect course design and materials before discussing ways in which the changes can be used to enhance the quality of teaching/learning. Certainly the various roles will all have an impact upon participant resistance and autonomy. The pre-service trainees may feel uncomfortable if they are not getting the direct teaching they expect, and in-service teachers may resent being 'taught', especially by a colleague.

In addition to this, although the function of a teacher educator is simply different from that of a teacher, there is sometimes the misplaced feeling among teachers/participants

that the educator's function is in some way higher than that of a (mere) teacher. The educator is thus elevated to a higher status. This elevation would be considered inappropriate in the setting of peer teacher education. Teachers are often asked to run an in-service session because within a particular field they are perceived to have more experience or qualifications than their colleagues, or perhaps to have done more research or read more. This is unlikely to cause great difficulty if the teacher's self-image matches that of their colleagues. At IALS this is normally the case, but it has happened that a colleague reported feeling that, though an 'expert' in one field, it was not with the kinds of student taught by the teachers asking for an in-service session; he felt he'd been approached because he is unofficially designated 'the IALS expert' in his field. Finally, a teacher may simply be the only person available with time to share their expertise. In this last case, it is likely that the decisions about in-service training are being made under some duress, however mild, raising the question of participant autonomy. Whatever the reason, the participants may hold particular opinions on the matter being discussed, and trainers should at all times expect to have their own ideas challenged (Lubelska and Robbins 1992).

What is more, the educator's own self-image can constrain their own autonomy: if there is any sense of 'elevation' to a trainer role, however temporary, the teacher running a session for colleagues for the first time is likely to be cautious in selecting content and tasks in order to avoid intensifying this feeling. There will also be a need to justify having a trainer role by minimising any tension, so risk-avoidance is a probable strategy. The problem here, of course, is that the session may be so bland as to produce nothing more than general 'chat' with nothing concrete to justify the time and energy expended by all concerned.

In their concern about role, function and status it is important, however, that educators in whatever setting are clear about their rights and duties. In the context with which we are concerned, educators must remind themselves that all teachers have the right to take on this role in relation to their colleagues. They in fact have a duty to do so both from a 'colleaguely' and an institutional point of view.

### 3.3 Resistance/openness

Whatever the perceived role and status of the trainer, if the course participants feel challenged in their ideas, beliefs or practice, it is fully understandable, firstly that they may feel destabilised, and secondly, that resistance is a natural defence to this: 'The re-thinking of our ideas presents a challenge to, or may seem to seriously threaten, the personal investment that we have already made in the issue' (Byrnes 1992:4). In the context of our chosen setting, the difficulties with challenging, or even simply discussing, deeply embedded assumptions and practices are intensified by the fact that one's colleagues generally possess a vast range of qualifications and experience, and have had time to develop and test out their own theories about teaching and learning languages. Of course, the resistance should be applauded, for it is potentially a positive force: the thinking through and analysis of the new ideas which a reflective resistor engages in is far more useful than any blind adoption of the proposed practices and theories.

Ur (1992) points out the difference between espoused theory and theory in action, i.e. between the theories we are able to describe and talk about and our actual classroom

practice. If these differences are made conscious, there may be some tension, and probably also resistance. Underhill's work (1992) on high- and low-yield questions goes some way to enabling a teacher educator to manage this tension, as does Woodward 's (1999) on moving from discussion of classroom tactics to beliefs. In this analysis, perhaps resistance is a sign of realisation and noticing, as well as a positive expression of autonomy. Such exploration can be painful and cause some friction – trainers need to expect this, and be skilled at dealing with it in a way that does not compromise their own autonomy i.e. by restricting their choice of activity, or their willingness to challenge participants' assumptions.

Once a training/development session is over, the teacher who chooses not to act on the ideas discussed in it may feel that they are exercising their autonomy by rejecting the practical application of a theory. Such 'reflective resistance' to change (Bobb-Wolff, personal communication: IALS Symposium 2001) is surely a clear sign of a participant's autonomy. The teacher who is unable to act, for whatever reason, may feel that they are not autonomous because of this, although it could be said that they have at least 'autonomy of thought'. In both cases, the autonomy expressed is that of 'freedom from control by others'.

How is the educator in this setting affected by these dichotomies: autonomy of thought vs. autonomy of action; espoused theory vs. theory in use? Most teacher educators recognise that the outcome of any session is unpredictable. In the context of peer teacher education, however, the (lack of) effect of their efforts is observable. If a teacher educator cannot see any change in their colleagues' teaching or ideas, that apparent decision not to act on the ideas and theories discussed (or espoused) in a session may be felt by the educator as an unspoken criticism. However, in considering this issue it should be remembered that there is no neat one-to-one relationship between a particular theory and a teacher's classroom practices, or indeed between a practice and a range of theories; that an observer's understanding of what is going on in a classroom may differ significantly from that of the teacher, who can probably relate it all to a coherent and well-thought-out set of underlying principles (Breen et al. 2001). The educator may in fact have more influence than they think, and the changes may simply be unexpected and therefore unobservable or unrecognised.

As we have already noted (Lubelska & Robbins ibid.), it is nevertheless crucial that educators recognise the right of participants to question or be critical of what is discussed and to have the right to choose how far their own ideas and practices will be affected by the input. Sessions/courses can be structured to allow time for this, for example by using the *Adopt, Adapt or Reject* strategy (O'Sullivan 1999). It is also important that some emotional distance is maintained between the educator, their subject and the participants. (Byrnes 1992) Objectivity in this regard will allow the educator to let go, to accept the rights of the participants to have ultimate choice over how much if anything they take on board, and how, i.e. to have control over their professional development (McGrath ibid.). This objectivity also helps the teacher in the position of educator to their peers to step out of the centre of the process, to remove themselves from the spotlight, so that the issue of their self-image can perhaps be less tied to how they view their role and rights in this setting.

## 4. Conclusions

There is, of course, no single solution to the concerns raised within the two 'problem' nodes on the model (educator self-image and participant resistance). However, in discussion with the Symposium participants and in our own reading and discussion, it has been possible to draw up a list of strategies likely to address at least some of the problems. If these difficulties can be dealt with, we believe that the autonomy of all participants to the process can be maximised.

### 4.1 Educator self image

It is clear that anyone working as a teacher educator, and vulnerable to insecurity about their status, rights or abilities, must work to reduce that vulnerability. This can be done by focusing on one's personal development and on one's place in the community of teacher educators. In the range of different settings set out in the model, some of the following strategies will be helpful in achieving this. All are recognised as methods of both teacher and trainer development.

- Make use of facilitative (self-help) groups (Underhill:1992)
- Operate a critical friendship scheme (Farrell:2001)
- Network
- Undertake peer observation
- Read widely - maintain competence in your area of expertise and as an educator
- Be self-aware, but not overly self-critical (Byrnes:1992)
- Team teach when possible (see Threadgold: 2001 for interesting report)
- Be reflective: e.g. keep a personal journal of being a teacher educator (Durham: 2001)
- Aim to develop a personal 'coherent and articulated theory of teacher training' (Brown: 1990)

### 4.2 Participant resistance/openness

We feel that there are a range of strategies available to the educator trying to deal with difficulties in this area. Borrowing from Dickinson's model for preparing learners for independence, we have divided these strategies into two:

#### 4.2.1 Methodological

- Consider operating a negotiated syllabus for training courses/sessions (Little: 1995; Nunan:1989)
- Use techniques which make use of participant issues (Woodward: 2001)
- Create a principled balance between low-yield and high-yield questions, the latter being more conducive to the development of self-awareness but also high risk (Underhill 1992:72)
- Don't present personal views as general truths (Byrnes: 1992)
- Exploit the trainees' potential as evaluators of their training (Borg: 1998)

- Consider asking participants to use the 3-point *Adapt, Adopt or Reject* strategy (O'Sullivan: 1999)
- Avoid dissatisfaction by ensuring that there is 'a tangible result from the mists of consciousness-raising' (Pye:1990)
- Use concrete methods for analysing the assumptions underlying your teaching practice (Woodward: 1999)

**4.2.2 Psychological**

- Engage with resistance/resistors (Byrnes:1992)
- Understand processes and effects of change (Luxon:1994)
- Take a philosophical and also long-term approach (Lubelska and Robbins:1999)
- Be objective (Byrnes:1992)

We would expect any steps taken to counteract difficulties experienced in these areas to have a positive effect on the perceived (sense of) autonomy of all the participants.

## 5. Some possible areas for further exploration

Although we have thought long and hard about these issues, we feel there is a lack of concrete data on how educators and participants react to their roles and relationships within education programmes and sessions. It is only by exploring these more methodically that we can reach a better understanding of how to design and administer teacher education. There are three areas in particular that we think could be investigated. First, participant attitudes to teacher education/development: this would reveal the degree to which matters such as control over content, method, timing and quantity etc. affected participant resistance-openness. Secondly, participant reactions to educators in different settings: for example, in what way are participant reactions to colleagues running in-service sessions different from their reactions to sessions run by visiting educators, and how might this affect their behaviour during and after the sessions. Finally, we feel it is important to try to explore the effect of audience on session design. This would, we hope, help educators to plan sessions to best suit their participants' needs and expectations.

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# EFFECTS OF FEEDBACK ON PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF ADVANCED LEARNERS ON AN ESP SPEAKING COURSE

**Tony Lynch and Joan Maclean (IALS)**

*Abstract*

*Most language learners and teachers believe correction and other forms of feedback help improve L2 accuracy and fluency. This study set out to investigate the effects of feedback on changes in spoken performance among a group of advanced learners of English attending an intensive ESP course in the Netherlands. In this paper we assess the extent to which feedback from tutors helped highlight weaknesses in the participants' spoken English and track changes in performance in those areas during the course. We conclude that the learners' perceptions of the value and effect of feedback were matched by real improvements in their spoken performance.*

## 1. Introduction

There is widespread, though not universal, agreement that language learners make better progress in the L2 if they receive overt feedback – though for a contrasting view, see Truscott (1996, 1999). Schachter (1983) went as far as to call feedback a 'nutritional need' for language learners, portraying it as having two dimensions – negative/positive on one axis and implicit/explicit on the other. In non-pedagogic interaction, feedback is more likely to take an implicit form, such as requests for clarification (implicit negative) and back-channelling (implicit positive), while in the conventional language classroom there is a tendency towards greater explicitness, for example, through formal correction (explicit negative) or praise (explicit positive).

The giving and understanding of feedback is a complex process, and Carroll (1996) has made the point that, particularly in informal conversation, feedback is intrinsically inferential in nature. Even in the classroom, where teachers expect and are expected to provide feedback, learners' responses to teacher feedback are bound to be 'filtered' through their individual interpretations of the teacher's intention. In the 1970s, there were various attempts, stimulated by Corder's work on the significance of learners' errors (Corder 1967), to map the routes by which feedback on L2 errors is given and received in the language classroom (e.g. Allwright 1975, Chaudron 1977, and Long 1977). The resulting flowcharts show that the researcher's task in representing interpretative

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decisions is difficult enough; the task of the teacher and learner, to engage in the feedback process in real time, is even harder. In the next two sections we summarise recent work on feedback in those two domains - first from the *technical* literature of SLA research and then from the *practical* literature of classroom methodology (terms from Ellis 1997).

### 1. 1 Technical literature

One of the developments in SLA research into feedback since the 1970s has been a shift from description to explanation – from categorising types of feedback to the investigation of what leads to successful uptake of feedback. This has applied to teachers' feedback on both written and spoken language, though here we will concentrate on the latter. (For recent reviews of research into feedback on L2 writing, see Grabe and Kaplan 1997, Hyland 2001, and Ferris 2002).

As we pointed out in the Introduction, there is no universal agreement among SLA researchers that feedback has any direct effect on learners' spoken performance; notably, Truscott (1999) has argued that oral correction by the teacher has no impact on spoken grammatical accuracy – following his similar claim that grammar teaching does not improve writing performance (Truscott 1996). However, the majority of SLA studies have borne out the assumption that some forms of feedback are effective in the short term, in the sense of leading to modification of the error and/or imitation of the correct form. One much-cited example is the study by Lyster and Ranta (1997) analysing the feedback provided by teachers in a Canadian primary school French immersion programme. Lyster and Ranta developed a descriptive framework combining categories from the negotiation of meaning and others from existing classroom observation schemes:

**Table 1: A framework for analyzing feedback** (Lyster and Ranta 1997)

| | |
|---|---|
| *Explicit correction* | provision of the correct form |
| *Recast* | reformulation of all or part of the learner's utterance |
| *Clarification request* | indication that what the learner has said is unclear or incorrect |
| *Metalinguistic feedback* | comments related to a problem in the learner's utterance but without providing the correct form |
| *Elicitation* | a teacher may (1) elicit completion of their own utterance, (2) ask a question to elicit a correct form, or (3) occasionally ask a learner to reformulate their own utterance |
| *Repetition* | teacher's repetition of a learner's incorrect utterance, usually with marked intonation to highlight the error |

Lyster and Ranta found that recasts accounted for more than half of all feedback, followed (in order of frequency) by elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic

feedback, explicit correction, and repetition. They argued that the predominance of recasts may well have been because the classes they studied were content-based, so that the teachers' and learners' attention was focused on the subject matter rather than the L2 form in which it was expressed. However, examination of the learners' responses to the six forms of teacher feedback showed that recasts were less effective than the other types in getting learners to produce the correct form. This bears out the findings of an earlier study of primary-age ESL schoolchildren (Oliver 1995), which found that the children did incorporate L2 points from recasts, but only in 10% of cases. Lyster and Ranta concluded that elicitation and metalinguistic feedback were most likely to succeed in producing correct forms from the learners.

Clearly, the issue of how teachers contribute to classroom discourse is important, since different pedagogic methods or approaches presumably require different patterns of participation and feedback. For example, in his proposal – or, rather, demand – for 'the Lexical Approach', Lewis (1993: 195) claimed that 'reformulation should be the natural response to learner error'. However, the evidence so far, from studies such as those of Lyster and Ranta, and Oliver, is that learners' uptake from implicit negative feedback is low.

Research within the framework of sociocultural theory (reviewed in Lantolf 2000 and Tarone 2000) has paid particular attention to the negotiation of feedback in collaborative dialogue between *expert* and *novice*, in Vygotskyan terms. The outcome of one influential study (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994) was a model describing the *graduated feedback* available in dialogic interaction, shown below.

**Regulatory scale – Implicit (strategic) to Explicit**

0 Tutor asks the learner to read, find the errors, and correct them independently, prior to the tutorial.

1 Construction of a 'collaborative frame' prompted by the presence of the tutor as a potential dialogic partner.

2 Prompted or focused reading of the sentence that contains the error.

3 Tutor indicates that something may be wrong in a segment (e.g. sentence, clause, line) – "Is there anything wrong in this sentence?"

4 Tutor rejects unsuccessful attempts at recognising the error.

5 Tutor narrows down the location of the error (e.g. tutor repeats or points to the specific segment containing the error).

6 Tutor indicates the nature of the error, but does not identify the error (e.g. "There is something wrong with the tense marking here").

7 Tutor identifies the error ("You can't use an auxiliary here").

8 Tutor rejects learner's unsuccessful attempts at correcting the error.

9 Tutor provides clues to help the learner arrive at the correct form (e.g. "It is not really past but something that is still going on").

10 Tutor provides the correct form.

11 Tutor provides some explanation for use of the correct form.

12 Tutor provides examples of the correct pattern when other forms of help fail to produce an appropriate responsive reaction.

(Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994: 471)

Aljaafreh and Lantolf's scale was designed to categorise feedback on written L2 output, and would obviously need to be adapted for use in describing the options available in feedback on spoken output. Moreover, the one-to-one tutorial featured in their study is hardly typical of most language classrooms, and research is needed into more typical classroom settings.

Apart from the issues of the type and degree of feedback, a number of other aspects have come under scrutiny in recent research: the need to explore the distinction between 'on the spot' learning and 'delayed learning', and the particular problems of identifying the latter (Gass 2002); the importance of the learners' perceptions of negative feedback, in the case of spoken language (Mackey, Gass and McDonough 2000) and writing (Leki 1991, Anderson, Benson and Lynch 2001); and the question – fundamental for the classroom – of why it is that a single exposure to feedback is sometimes enough for immediate uptake (Doughty 2001).

### 1.2 Practical literature

As is often the case, there is a striking difference between the assumptions of language teaching methodologists and those of SLA researchers. Authors who have discussed feedback from a pedagogic perspective seem to have been at least as much concerned with its social and affective repercussions as with its effect on individuals' learning. Harmer, for example, calls for 'gentle correction' (2001: 107) and Rinvolucri is critical of teachers who provide 'hamfisted feedback' (1994: 288). Even the use of the word *negative* seems to be avoided in the methodological literature, which makes an interesting contrast with the unconcerned use of the term 'explicit negative feedback' in the technical literature.

The advice offered to inexperienced teachers tends to be presented in purely practical and simplistic terms, particularly in courses designed for initial teacher training. Here are some examples from methodology books dealing with feedback during group work:

> 'Don't correct unless the aim of the activity is controlled [and] unless a student asks you to... If the students need a lot of help and correction then the chances are that the task is inappropriate and/or beyond their capabilities'
>
> (Gower and Walters 1983: 46)

> 'Don't correct mistakes. Make a note of anything serious and reteach it in another lesson'
>
> (Byrne 1987: 79)

> 'The teacher must sit or crouch down so that she or he is at the same height as the students'
>
> (Brown 1988, quoted in Wajnryb 1992)

The assumptions underlying these three prescriptions appear to be that: (1) there is a fixed maximum amount of correction that a learner can reasonably expect; (2) 'anything serious' must already have been covered in the course; and (3) standing up affects the acceptability or effectiveness of the feedback!

In the latest edition of perhaps the most widely-used British EFL teacher education text, Harmer (2001) follows Edge in dividing mistakes into *slips*, *errors* and *attempts* (Edge 1989) – the last category being cases where a learner tries to say something that is beyond their current L2 level. (These seem to be what Swain has referred to as *holes* in learners' interlanguage). Harmer says the teacher's main priority is errors, but does not explain how the teacher is supposed to establish in which category any given mistake belongs. His view is that

> 'the feedback process is only finished once [the students] have made these changes. If students consult grammar books or dictionaries as a way of resolving some of the mistakes we have signalled for them, the feedback we have given has had a positive outcome'
>
> (Harmer 2001: 112).

That is an odd statement, implying that feedback is completed, not by the learning of the correct form or item, but when the learner shows signs of having initiated progress towards it.

Increasingly, methodologists emphasise the need to extend feedback beyond correction of language form. Mendelsohn (1995) recommended a 'triple focus' in feedback in oral skills classes: *linguistic*, *sociolinguistic* (including paralinguistic features such as body language and gesture) and – not least – *content*. Similarly, Lynch and Anderson (1992) advised teachers to provide different types of feedback focus, depending on the speech genre being practised. In the case of information-gap tasks, they recommended a focus on the *clarity and precision* of the information; in role-plays, a sequential focus on overall *strategy* (cf. Mendelsohn's 'content') first, followed by comments on the relative success of the *communication*, the learner's use of the *information* provided, and finally *language*; and in the case of formal presentations, the use of an evaluation checklist covering all three of Mendelsohn's areas.

## 2. The Study

### 2.1 Background

In a previous IALS research project we investigated the effects of simple practice on spoken performance (Lynch and Maclean 2000; Lynch and Maclean 2001). We found

that learners made language improvements over a cycle of classroom activity in which they repeated the same speaking task with different partners, without receiving any language feedback from the teacher between task episodes in the cycle. The actual improvements differed from learner to learner, but it appeared that the learners were each able to exploit the task in their own way to make at least short-term language gains.

These findings led us to speculate on the effect of teacher-initiated feedback in a sequence of speaking tasks. It is possible that feedback on points selected by the teacher could

1. interfere with the learner's natural processes and actually inhibit learning

2. help learners to notice the gap between their performance and the desired target, and so facilitate learning (Chaudron 1977; Schmidt and Frota 1986)

3. have no discernible effect, positive or negative

We were interested therefore, as a next step, to investigate the effects, if any, of feedback interpolated between speaking tasks in a sequence. The data source for our study was the *English for Medical Congresses* course that IALS has run in the Netherlands for more than ten years. It was chosen for three reasons. Firstly, feedback on spoken performance is central to its rationale and design. Secondly, the feedback procedures involve both written feedback records and audio- and video-recording of certain tasks, and therefore data collection would not interfere with or distort the normal course routines. Finally, the course caters for a similar learner community to that investigated in our earlier research into the effect of practice and repetition.

### 2.2 Description of the course

The version of *English for Medical Congresses* that we run in the Netherlands is a 25-hour course, lasting three and a half very full days. The course is sponsored by the Dutch Heart Foundation and the participants are medical researchers working in areas related to cardiovascular health, including health promotion. The majority are Dutch, in their thirties and engaged on PhD research. Their level of English ranges from early advanced to native-like.

The course consists of a sequence of speaking tasks, culminating in a conference on the final day of the course. The speaking task sequence is preceded, on Day 1, by language input sessions on grammar and pronunciation problems, collected from participants on previous courses. The points covered in these sessions can be seen as *pre-casts* (Samuda 2001), intended to raise awareness; they also represent a practical reference point and baseline, so that feedback can be given more quickly later in the course. The course then moves into a cycle of task performance and feedback, with one input session on Day 2 on phrasing and emphasis, and one on Day 3 on signalling language.

The tasks are designed to be graded, and the resulting feedback is also designed to increase in complexity. Day 1 features audio-recording of problem words; on Day 2, the

participants record 3-minute oral summaries, and on Day 3 group presentations are video-recorded in the morning, and rehearsals of individual conference presentations are video-recorded in the afternoon. Day 4 consists entirely of the final conference, at which each participant's presentation is also video-recorded. After the course, the participants each receive a video of their own presentation, with written feedback. See Appendix 1 for a summary of the course activities and types of feedback.

The objectives of the course, from the designer's and tutors' point of view, are primarily English language improvement, with improvement of presentation skills a strong second objective. However, at the start of the course, when participants are asked to state their personal objectives, a few mention just language improvement, and a few note just presentation skills. Most include both, and feedback is therefore given on both aspects of spoken performance.

Of those who state language improvement as an objective, some prioritise accuracy and others fluency, according to their perception of their own abilities. Fluency is obviously necessary for presentation skills, but these learners tend to rate both accuracy and fluency as important, for prestige among academic peers and for self-esteem. Increased complexity (Skehan 1998) is occasionally mentioned, mainly in terms of new vocabulary, but overall this has low priority for this particular group of learners, at least at the start of the course, compared to accuracy and fluency.

Continuous feedback records are kept throughout the course for each person; a sample is shown as Appendix 2. The groups rotate among the three tutors teaching the course, who each add to the continuous feedback record, which is kept by the learner. The learners also fill in Language Logs when preparing their rehearsal performance and final performance. As far as presentation skills are concerned, they complete self-evaluation forms of their own rehearsal, and peer evaluation forms for each other in the final performance. After the course, tutors analyse the video-recordings of the final presentations and send feedback on both presentation skills and English language.

### 2.3 Our research questions

The questions we set out to investigate in the study were these:

1 Is there evidence that *English for Medical Congresses* learners (a) become aware of and (b) master language problems identified in teacher feedback?

2 Is there evidence that they (a) become aware of and (b) master language problems not identified in teacher feedback?

3 Are the learners themselves aware of any changes in their language performance?

4 Do they have comments on what they find useful or not useful in the various modes of feedback on language improvement that they experience during the course?

### 2.4 Data collection

At the end of the course in November 2000, we asked the participants to complete questionnaires (see Appendix 3) on their perceptions of language improvement, and the value of the different types of feedback. We also asked their permission to make copies of their written feedback and recordings for research purposes. All 24 participants completed the research questionnaires, and 15 gave consent for the copying of feedback and recordings. Our data therefore consisted of:

A 24 completed **questionnaires** on perceptions of gain and value of feedback

B 15 sets of

- **Feedback Forms** and audio-recorded pronunciation feedback from tutors over three days: *Two-minute talks, Informal talks, Using your voice; Reporting back, Data presentation, and Rehearsal*. Also the final post-course feedback from the *Conference* on Day 4.
- **Language Log 1** (Day 1) and **Language Log 2** (Day 3).
- **Audio–recordings** of *Two-Minute talks* (Day 1), *Reporting back* (Day 2), *Preparing the presentation* (Day 3).
- **Video-recordings** of *Rehearsal* (Day 3), and final *Conference* (Day 4).

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Questionnaire returns

So far we have analysed the 24 questionnaires, and the recordings and feedback records for 12 of the 15 who gave consent. We excluded materials from the remaining three participants, as they had not completed the Language Logs.

#### 3.1.1 Perceived gains in language

Pronunciation gains were noted by 21 out of 24. Of these 21, 14 specified pronunciation of technical terms, and two specified phonological changes (from what we called "Dutch pronunciation").

Fluency gains were specified by only two out of 24, though two more mentioned increased confidence.

Gains in grammar were noted by eight out of 24 - some from feedback and some from the "pre-cast" session on grammar.

Although nobody had stated at the start of the course that increased complexity was their learning objective, four participants specified gains in the use of signalling phrases ("I didn't use them much before") and five others specified gains in the use of stress for

emphasising important words, and phrasing. Both these aspects had been introduced in input sessions and then practised in performance.

### 3.1.2 Perceived usefulness of performance, analysis and feedback

Overall, the highest ratings were given to

- viewing the rehearsal — rated at 1 — by 15 out of 24
- rehearsal itself — rated at 1 — by 13 out of 24
- tutor feedback on rehearsal — rated at 1 — by 13 out of 24

Language Log 1 activities (speaking with a partner, analysing recording oneself, discussing points from analysis with tutor) were given highest ratings by some, and lowest by others. It may be that individuals differed in the extent to which they preferred to be responsible for critiquing their own performance. Alternatively, it may be that some pairs worked better together as partners than others.

Interpretation is also made more difficult by the fact that not all of the participants did the Language Log 1 activity as instructed. Logistical problems with computers on the evening of Day 2 had created long queues to prepare *Powerpoint* slides, and some participants therefore recorded themselves alone, without speaking to a partner. We cannot tell from our data whether this was a factor in their giving the activity a high or low rating. Also, quite a number who had not done the task at all rated it as least useful; again, we cannot tell whether they found it least useful because they did not do it, or *vice versa*.

One enlightening finding, from the point of view of planning future courses, was that filling in Language Log 2 (while viewing the video-recorded rehearsal) received a low rating in comparison with viewing the video-recording and discussing it with the tutor. In retrospect, this is not surprising. In addition to its recording function, the Log was intended to encourage self-criticism/awareness, but such encouragement seemed unnecessary. They already analysed and evaluated as they watched their performance on tape (viz. the high ratings for the usefulness of viewing) and so completing Language Log 2 may well have been thought a purely bureaucratic requirement. The recording itself, however, remains useful as input to discussion with the tutor. So in EMC courses run since November 2000, Language Log 2 has been retained, but in a very much simpler format.

### 3.2 Some sample extracts from the data sets

For each learner we made up a datasheet, which traces the chronological course of various elements of speaking performance and feedback (including self-analysis in Language Logs) over the four days. In particular, we noted linguistic items – phonological, lexical or syntactic - that were highlighted in feedback and then occurred in subsequent performance. In such cases, we categorised the items in four ways:

1. "blithely wrong" - where the speaker appeared unaware of being wrong

2. wrong, but with evidence of attention and additional processing – e.g. hesitation, pausing and/or self-correction

3. right, but with evidence of attention and additional processing

4. right without apparent effort

Those four categories were marked in the datasheets as (1) **bold**, (2) <u>underlined</u>, (3) *italic* and (4) regular font.

We also compared and noted each individual's questionnaire responses, so that they could be compared with their performance and feedback records.

Finally we summarised what we felt were key points in the learner's performance data and our interpretation of those. On the next two pages is a sample data sheet for Beryl; (like all other participants' names in this report, 'Beryl' is a pseudonym).

**Data sheet 2: Beryl**

| | Pronunciation | Lexicogrammar | other |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pronunciation Introduction** | 'through', not 'true'<br>gap (aspirate) junction, not 'gabjunction' | I look (at) how… | Tendency to rising intonation at ends of sentences |
| **Informal Talk: Feedback from tutor** | 'potassium' like 'at'<br>'hemi-channel', as /e/<br>'identified', as in 'eye'<br>'hyperTROphic'; 'hyPERtrophy'<br>'CHAracterised'; 'SYNthesis'<br>'in vitro'; 'theory', not 't-' | 'I may explain…' should be 'I can…<br><br>'put it into the mouse' = inject?<br><br>To limitate = to limit | That's very interesting = say with more enthusiasm |
| **Language Log 1** | Errors noted:<br>Hypertrophy / hypertrophic<br>Too little difference between 'connexin' and 'connexon'<br>'construct' (like 'up')<br>'through', not 'true'; 'three', not 'tree'<br>'microscopic' (stress) | Errors noted:<br>'what I want to tell' = 'what I want to say'<br><br>Query to tutor:<br>Can I say ' The amount of marker protein indicates the transcription level' | Intended changes for presentation:<br><br>Textual changes but not to visual aids or length |
| **Presentation: Rehearsal** | **gap junction** (numerous)<br>potassium<br>connexin (numerous)<br>**throughout; three** - *three*<br>**hypertrophy**; hypertrophy<br>hypertrophy (x 3)<br>**synthesis**; *synthesis*<br>**characterized** | | |
| **Language Log 2** | Note to '*change of accent*' for 'determine'; 'characterized'; 'hypertrophy'; 'microscopy' | | |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Rehearsal: Feedback from tutor** | 'proteins' as /i:nz/<br>'sinus/sino' as 'eye', not 'ee'<br>'eLEctron miCROscopy'<br>'axon/exon'<br>'hypertrophy'<br>'CHAracterised'<br>'mediated' as 'me…' | is not known until now = it is still not known… | Nice visuals<br>Stood well<br>Good pace<br>Good eye contact<br>Clear loud voice<br>Tend to end with very low fall |
| **Presentation: Performance** | **gap junction** (numerous); gap junction (x2) sinoatrial; **mediated;**<br>**protein** – protein – **protein (x2)** – protein (x2) – **protein** – protein – *protein* – protein – protein<br>microscopy - microscopy<br>hypertrophic<br>hypertrophy - *hypertrophy*<br>synthesis; construct<br>**characterized** – *characterized*- characterized<br>**three**, **third** | **is not known until now** | Still high-rising intonation after clauses |
| **Questionnaire** | Beryl says she noticed changes in language: pronunciation; trying to speak less monotonously, but 'during the presentation I kind of forgot this'.<br>Usefulness grades: **1** – Tutor's answers to Log 1 queries; rehearsal practice; viewing the rehearsal video; completing Log 2; tutor feedback on rehearsal; **2** – talking through with partner; analyzing recording using Log 1.<br><br>"I think if I say something wrong now, at least I realize it, and the pronunciation of a lot of words I am doing better now – but still not everything, but I hope to improve this in the future, because I know now how to pronounce it correctly". | | |

**Summary**
Beryl's final presentation very much confirms the summary she wrote in her questionnaire: some sounds/items are now correct; others are on the way to being correct; some are regularly incorrect.

From Beryl's datasheet we can trace, for example, the difficulty she had with syllable stress in the word *hypertrophy*. In the Informal Talk on Day 2 of the course, instead of stressing the second syllable, she produced the word with main stress on the first and secondary stress on the third. Our coding of occurrences of *hypertrophy* in the Pronunciation column of the datasheet on the previous pages shows that in nine occurrences from Informal Talk to final Presentation, Beryl improved the accuracy of the stress-placement after tutor feedback, as follows:

**Table 2: Stress-placement in *'hypertrophy'* (Beryl)**

| | wrong | wrong, after hesitation | right, after hesitation | right |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Informal Talk* | ✓ | | | |
| *Presentation: Rehearsal* | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓<br>✓ |
| *Presentation: Performance* | | ✓ | ✓ | |

Note: Ticks represent occurrences in chronological order

Our data allow us to make a direct contrast of this particular feature between the overall improvement by Beryl and the lack of improvement by another participant, Fred, whose production the syllable stress in *hypertrophy* remained unhesitatingly inaccurate over 11 occurrences, despite his having received similar feedback from the tutor after the Day 2 Informal Talk.

**Table 3: Stress-placement in *'hypertrophy'* (Fred)**

| | wrong | wrong, after hesitation | right, after hesitation | right |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Informal Talk* | (1) | | | |
| *Presentation: Rehearsal* | (3) | | | |
| *Presentation: Performance* | (7) | | | |

A particular difficulty for Dutch speakers of English is the fortis/lenis distinction, particularly at the end of a word that is followed by a word beginning with a voiced consonant. Examples in our data include *gap junction*, heard by the tutor as "gab junction", and *Heart Day*, heard as "hard day". Our data show that even over a relatively short period of course time learners can be made aware of such problems and can be seen (and heard) working towards greater accuracy. To illustrate this, we have data from Kate, a researcher working in health promotion. In talking about her work, Kate needed to refer to various awareness-raising activities, among which were Heart Days and a dance competition for school pupils. Table 3 shows her production of heart dance awards over the three days.

**Table 4: Production of word-final /t/ in *heart dance*** (Kate)

| | **wrong** | **wrong, after hesitation** | **right, after hesitation** | **right** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Informal Talk: Tutor feedback* | "I thought you said hard dance awards" | | | |
| *Presentation: Rehearsal* | ✓<br>✓<br>✓ | | ✓ | |
| *Presentation: Performance* | | | ✓ | ✓ |

There we have some evidence that Kate became more accurate in her pronunciation and that after seeing her Presentation rehearsal and getting tutor feedback, she was able to get the expression right, first with some hesitation and then without, in her final Presentation.

Our illustrations so far have featured segmental and suprasegmental points, and while it is true that the majority of tutor feedback comments were about phonology, there were also cases of lexical and grammatical correction. One such came from Sue, who produced *intermittent claudication* ('claudication' = limping) as *claudication intermittent*. The way in which she increased the correctness of her word order is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** ***claudication intermittent* v. *intermittent claudication*** ('Sue')

| | **wrong** | **wrong, after hesitation** | **right, after hesitation** | **right** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Informal Talk: Tutor feedback* | "claudication intermittent" = intermittent claudication | | | |
| *Presentation: Unpartnered rehearsal* | ✓<br>✓<br>✓ | | ✓<br>✓ | ✓<br>✓<br>✓<br>✓<br>✓ |
| *Presentation: Partnered rehearsal* | | | | (9) |
| *Presentation: Performance* | | | | (7) |

In this case, perhaps because decisions about word-order are under more conscious control than is the accuracy of segmental or supra-segmental production, Sue appears to have made a clear 'switch' after her first (unpartnered) rehearsal to 100% accuracy in the second rehearsal. All 16 instances of the target expression in the partnered rehearsal and final Presentation were correct and delivered without audible hesitation.

### 3.3 Overall summary of the data set

For reasons of space we will now summarise our findings in the form of the individual summaries that we made at the end of each participant's data sheet, and will then tease out the main threads we have so far discerned in the data. The change of font indicates that these are working notes, made by the individual researcher, rather than a final analysis.

**Ann**

(Comment: her English was good in tests, and pronunciation is excellent. Yet she often said she felt her English was inadequate, in spite of reassurance from tutors and participants - see post-course feedback). She was hesitant and nervous in the Pronunciation Introduction, then too fast in Informal Talks, then steadier in pace. She

had episodes of processing difficulty (in Pronunciation Introduction) and in the Informal Talk. Unfortunately, only half the final Presentation was recorded, so we don't know how she managed at start. Overall she improved in managing her speed, intonation and hesitation noises. Faults: (1) overuse of Pres Cont and Pres Perf - no changes; (2) *death doubled* changed to *rate of death* instead of *death rate*. Her questionnaire responses are in line with our data, but she may not fully realise to what extent her episodes of processing difficulty are due to nerves rather than poor English.

**Beryl**
Beryl's final Presentation very much confirms what she said in her questionnaire: "I think if I say something wrong now, at least I realize it, and the pronunciation of a lot of words I am doing better now – but still not everything, but I hope to improve this in the future, because I know now how to pronounce it correctly". The data show that some sounds/items were correct by the final Presentation; others were on the way to being correct; and some were regularly incorrect.

**Dave**
A fluent and confident speaker overall. The most noticeable change in response to feedback is to his lip-rounding of *up*, etc. There is some evidence that he operates in two modes: in the final presentation he lip-rounded *substances* during question time, though he produced all the other instances in the prepared part of the Presentation correctly.

**Ella**
Ella wrote in her questionnaire 'I still try to improve my pronunciation, and before the presentation I planned trying not to speak so monotonous. But during the presentation I kind of forgot this, so I don't know whether it was (a bit) improved'.

As she said, Ella showed definite if not perfect improvement in pronunciation - mastering **v/f** in the key medical terms in her Presentation, and apparently more general **v/f** too. Note that *blood* was still wrong in the final Presentation, but correct in question time.

She corrected two out of her three lexicogrammar mistakes. She may have a strategy of avoidance: *say/tell* was not used after early errors.

**Emma**
Emma was a noticeably systematic user of feedback, going to the length of making her own notes on the tutors' comments on the feedback forms. She made excellent progress with the pronunciation of *exacerbation, rationale, period, steroid, therapeutic/; beginning to improve / study*. I have the impression that all **th** sounds were more accurate. *Study* was self-corrected once in the final Presentation; but backslid on *period* in question time. No change in intonation. *Exists of* persisted in Presentation but was noted in the questionnaire as having been learnt.

**Fred**
What is not clear in the datasheet is that Fred had masses of Arabic L1 pronunciation and grammar problems - apparently randomly right and wrong. Labile vowels; tendency not to aspirate unvoiced consonants, etc. – e.g. *pathway* was recorded first as a **th** problem but later as **p/b** problem. Also, labile grammar with many mistakes in articles and sing/pl verbs - not much recorded by tutors.

His grading of feedback activities in the questionnaire suggests that he liked analysing himself with support and guidance.... Perhaps gained in awareness of problems and perceived more change than actually happened.

**Frank**
Mastered points from feedback.

Pronunciation: *athero* and *ultrasound* were corrected in tutor feedback for **th** and **u** in the first two activities, then were OK in rehearsal and performance. *Coherence* was corrected in feedback to Informal Talk, and was then OK in rehearsal and performance.

Lexicogrammar:

(1) *the Optical Coherence Tomography* was corrected (article deletion) after first activity, and OK in all following activities.
(2) *research is carried out* in rehearsal is corrected to Continuous in performance
(3) likewise *to sum up* is corrected to *to sum up so far'*
(4) *minimally invasive* correct with detectable processing difficulty (we had discussed this expression - he found it bizarre, and difficult to say).
(5) possibly avoided *told* - using *pointed out* - but impossible to be sure.

**Jack**
Grammar was almost perfect, though I heard some minor errors not noted in tutor feedback. Pronunciation was also good in general, so his target points were all pronunciation of medical terms. Some appeared to be mastered, and others well under way to being mastered in final performance. Interestingly, *angiographic* was wrongly pronounced with /g/ every time, though he correctly used /dz/ instead of /g/ every time in *angiography* and *angioplasty*.

I thought he had taken advice of rehearsal feedback and was pausing slightly – and appropriately – when using signals.

**Kate**
Kate seems to have been able to direct attention to correcting some aspects of the pronunciation (e.g. **t/th** and **v/w**), but the combination of word-final **t** and word-initial **d** (*heart day*, *heart dance awards*) was trickier. On one occasion she did manage to produce *heart dance awards* successfully – which was the expression that the tutor had commented on having misunderstood. She was also able to self-correct the misplaced stress in *characteristic* and to get it right by slowing down.

**Nellie**
Nellie was able to act effectively on most of the points that had come up in feedback or Logs. In the case of *diagnosis*, some evidence that (like Dave) Nellie reverted to an incorrect version – /di-/ not /dai-/ - under the pressure of the question time section of the Presentation.

**Sue**
Interesting (unique?) use of unpartnered Rehearsal. She didn't fill in Log 1, but we can see how she works on tutor feedback from earlier activities. Also interesting that this is without a partner... showing the value of practice even without feedback from a listener. She gets better at segmental **v**, too, and by the final presentation is producing a v-like sound in most cases.

**Silvia**
Silvia is apparently able to direct more effective real-time attention to phonemes than to intonation, even though she notes in Log 2 that she needs to improve the latter. That bears out what Dalton and Seidlhofer say about the relative difficulty of (self-)correcting intonation. Generally very accurate and proficient, which is perhaps why she regards only tutor feedback as 'very helpful'.

## 4. Discussion

Our earlier research (Lynch and Maclean 2000, 2001) focused on a similar group of *English for Medical Congresses* learners to those in this study, but there are important differences in the nature of the speaking tasks and feedback in the two studies. In the earlier research, the feedback was implicit, came from peers, arose in interactive discussion, and occurred in real time. In this present study, feedback was explicit (levels 10-12 on the Aljaafreh and Lantolf scale mentioned earlier), came mainly from the tutor, arose primarily in prepared presentations, and occurred after a time-delay to allow replay of the recordings.

Although we have not yet had time to analyse the data on a full case-study basis, we believe there is enough evidence to confirm that the widely expressed faith in tutor feedback does have an empirical basis, at least in the particular one-to-one form that the *English for Medical Congresses* course design allows. Most of the participants did improve their 'strike-rate' of correct L2 forms in the areas that had been brought to their attention by the tutor. Pending further analysis of our data, we would like to highlight aspects of participant behaviour and perception which we think are of wider interest and hope to investigate in greater detail.

The most striking finding was the learners' increased awareness of their language use, something that several commented on positively in their questionnaires. Throughout the course, the tutors emphasised that language learning involves both declarative and procedural knowledge, as opposed to the learning of scientific facts in the fields in which many of the participants specialise. A number of their questionnaire comments show that they recognised that improvements in English were likely to build up over time through a complex interaction of rule-learning and adequate opportunity for proceduralisation:

> "I think if I say something wrong now, at least I realize it, and the pronunciation of a lot of words I am doing better now. But still not everything, but I hope to improve this in the future, because I know now how to pronounce it correctly". (Beryl)

> "I have learnt how to do it, now I have to practice!" (Ann)

The second point is related to the first. Our data show that learners do not reach a 'stable state' of complete accuracy in a particular language area; gains in accuracy during the series of speaking tasks are vulnerable to pressure, such as time (Skehan 1998). In particular, there is evidence from the datasheets that several learners performed at

different levels of accuracy in the prepared Presentation for the final day conference than in the question-time following the Presentation. Four participants (Dave, Emma, Fred and Nellie) made errors while dealing with audience questions in expressions that they had produced correctly in their Presentation. It would be understandable that when *communicative stress* (Brown and Yule 1983) rises, the speaker has less attentional capacity available for other aspects of performance. This is underlined by two responses to the questionnaire item *What exactly did you change?*:

> "In language [I changed] some expressions – I also forgot one or two in the heat of the moment". (Dave)

> "Before the presentation I planned trying not to speak so monotonous. But during the presentation I kind of forgot this". (Beryl)

On the other hand, there were two participants (Ella and Jack) who produced more accurate forms of words during question time than they had in the Presentation itself. Arguably, some individuals actually feel <u>less</u> stressed in a presentation once the prepared part is over and they are able interact with their audience more informally.

Of course, we would not claim that all changes in performance resulted from tutor feedback. Although our analysis has concentrated on tracing the sequential links between points made in written tutor feedback and the accuracy of those points in subsequent learner performance, there were many other inputs during the *English for Medical Congresses* course - the input lessons themselves (see Appendix 1), what we might call 'collateral' input from feedback given to other participants in the class, and the feedback that some received from peers in collaborative rehearsal.

The datasheets reflect a greater emphasis on phonology in tutors' feedback notes than on grammar, and the words featured under Pronunciation are predominantly medical vocabulary. One reason for this is that individual learners cannot avoid the key terms in their academic area, which the course structure requires them to talk about informally, then formally, then in rehearsal, and finally in the conference. The second is that these are relatively advanced learners and make few syntactic and lexical errors in their specialist domain. We found very few instances in our data of repeated grammar error, or of corrected grammar error. In free performance, learners are not bound to specific syntactic structures; it could be that after feedback on grammatical mistakes, some learners avoided using the troublesome structure, thereby gaining in accuracy. But this can be only speculation.

## 5. <u>Conclusion</u>

Our study has gone beyond the very short-term focus of Lyster and Ranta (1997), which examined immediate post-feedback imitation by learners, and of Ohta (1995), which looked at learners' use of recast expressions within the same lesson. Similarly, this research has extended the time-scale of our own previous study of the effects of practice

(Lynch and Maclean 2000, 2001), involving a 20-minute cycle of speaking tasks, and has focused on potential effects during a task cycle lasting more than three days.

It is conventional in discussions of feedback in language learning to emphasise that feedback is a complex area – and it is. But our research so far suggests that if teachers provide feedback on spoken performance in written form and on an individual basis, and combine it with recordings of the performance, that may have the benefit of making feedback more accessible, more easily retrievable later and possibly more effective, especially in a series of linked pedagogic tasks such as those in the *English for Medical Congresses* course. The next stage of our study will expand this preliminary analysis into a fuller case-study description of the changes learners made to their spoken performances.

As always, the question arises as to how far the findings of an analysis of particular classroom data can be generalised to other settings. However, while it is true that the *English for Medical Congresses* course features an unusual degree of individualised feedback, it is by no means unique in doing so. At IALS, for example, a wide range of courses, both for general and specific-purpose language learners of English, include work on presentation skills, during which learners are given written feedback on their speaking. If it can be shown that a combination of written feedback and recordings helps learners to improve their subsequent performances, that will strengthen the argument that learners and teachers are right to regard the provision of feedback as a beneficial element of a speaking skills course.

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Appendix 1 **Outline of course: activities and types of feedback**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | 1 | **Introduction and Opening activities.** Quick tests, and meeting other participants through an introductory listening and speaking activity.<br>*no feedback (relaxed activity)* |
| | 2 | ***Grammar and vocabulary: difficulties for Dutch speakers.*** *Overview of errors most frequently made by participants on previous courses, including discussion of grammar items in test from previous session* |
| | 3 | **Pronunciation difficulties for Dutch speakers.** Overview and practice, followed by **Two minute talks**. mini-presentations by participants on their own work.<br>*2-min talks audio-recorded on personal cassette; personal written feedback from tutor on grammar and vocabulary, with pronunciation feedback on cassette; some points selected for review with group* |
| | 4 | **Discussion skills**. Asking and answering questions, giving opinions, commenting, agreeing and disagreeing: useful phrases, and practice.<br>*no feedback, except informal according to tutor judgment (relaxed activity)* |
| | 5 | **Editing abstracts.**<br>*individual review with tutors* |
| Day 2 | 6 | **Informal talks.** Participants talk interactively about their work, for about 15 minutes each (sitting round table, using white board as necessary).<br>*15-min talks not recorded; personal feedback from tutor, and selected points for review with group, as in 3 above.* |
| | 7 | **Using your voice.** Using phrasing and emphasis for effective speaking: analytical exercises followed by 4-minute presentations, using OHP and graphs given by tutor.<br>*4 min presentations at OHP not recorded; feedback as in 3 and 6 but including comment on use of voice, stance, eye contact, etc.* |
| | 8 | **Reporting back.** Using audiocassette input, each participant prepares a 3-minute oral summary (to report sitting round table).<br>*3-min oral summary audio-recorded on personal cassette, feedback as in 3 and 6* |
| | 9 | **Preparation of conference presentations .** Individually drafting outline and visual aids; talking informally through outline and visual aids with a partner; audio-recorded, then noting corrections and queries, and consulting tutor.<br>*Language Log 1: i.e. participant notes corrections and queries from discussion with partner, and then from tutor* |
| Day 3 | 10 | **Presentation styles and techniques.** Consideration of video-recorded examples of presentation techniques, with particular focus on language.<br>*Blank Speaker Evaluation Form given out for use in final conference, and to focus practice before it. (form more on presentation than language skills)* |
| | 11 | **Data presentation.** Participants work together on adapting tables of data for visual presentation, and then practise style and technique in 5-minute group presentations.<br>*5-min group presentations video-recorded and then reviewed immediately; peer discussion with tutor; written feedback from tutor, emphasis on presentation skills* |
| | 12 | **Rehearsal of conference presentations.** Individually, with tutor(while others prepare posters).<br>*10-min presentation recorded on personal video (also audio if liked). Viewed later by participant with a partner, using Speaker Evaluation Form, also Language Log 2 with corrections and queries; then discussed with tutor, who gives written feedback on language and presentation skills.* |
| | 13 | **Poster session**. Practice in asking and answering questions quickly and concisely.<br>*no language feedback (relaxed activity) unless for something striking; group evaluation of posters* |
| Day 4 | 14 | ***Conference.*** *10 minute papers followed by 3 minute question-time*<br>*Video-recorded. Peer evaluation through Speaker Evaluation forms, written after each presentation, given to speakers at end of conference. Videos reviewed post-course by tutors and sent to participants with written feedback on language and presentation skills.* |



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Appendix 2 **LANGUAGE LOG : preparing your presentation**

***1*** *Reading the abstract: pronunciation feedback from tutor (Monday evening)*

| |
|---|
| |

***2*** *Talking through your presentation to a partner (± audio-recording): note any mistakes and corrections and bring queries to a tutor (Tuesday evening)*

| *WRONG or DOUBTFUL* | **YOUR CORRECTION** | *FEEDBACK FROM TUTOR* |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

*if there is not enough space please use the other side of this paper*

***3*** *Reviewing your video-recorded rehearsal: first fill in speaker evaluation sheet with a partner; then note below <u>language</u> mistakes; then review with tutor for feedback (Wednesday evening)*

| *WRONG or DOUBTFUL* | *YOUR CORRECTION* |
|---|---|
| | |

*if there is not enough space please use the other side of this paper*

Appendix 3

## *Research questionnaire*

*This course was designed to help you improve both language and presentation skills. Using video and feedback is a well-established way of improving presentation skills, but our research interest is in the development of language skills. We would very much like to have your comments on the questions below.*

If you have already agreed to contribute feedback and recording data to the project, please sign here again (so that we can relate this questionnaire to your data)

_____

If you have not agreed, there is no need to sign, but we would be pleased if you would still fill in this questionnaire.

**1.1** In your conference presentation this morning, did you notice any changes, compared with your rehearsal

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| in content? | YES / NO | *please circle* |
| in language? | YES / NO | *please circle* |

**1.2** If so, what exactly did you change?

**1.3** For each of these changes, could you indicate whether it was planned or unplanned? Please put P or U against each "item" above.

2 Grade the following for how much they helped you <u>from the point of view of language improvement</u>, using this 1-4 scale:

1 very helpful
2 helpful
3 not very helpful
4 no help at all

| | |
|---|---|
| talking through the presentation with your partner (planning stage) | ☐ |
| analysing the audiorecording yourself (Language Log 1) | ☐ |
| getting answers to Language Log 1 from a tutor | ☐ |
| the practice of the rehearsal itself | ☐ |
| viewing the rehearsal video | ☐ |
| completing Language Log 2 (on the rehearsal video) | ☐ |
| feedback from a tutor on the rehearsal video | ☐ |
| other (please specify) | ☐ |

3 Do you think you have made any language improvement during this course?
If so, please note here anything you have learned in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, or use of language. Please be as specific as possible.

*Thank you very much for your help.*

# LEARNER DIARY RESEARCH WITH 'CAMBRIDGE' EXAMINATION CANDIDATES

**Brian Parkinson, Cathy Benson and Michael Jenkins (IALS)**

*Abstract*

*This article explores the life-worlds of three students preparing for the 'Cambridge' examinations as revealed in their diaries. It reveals three very rich complexes of attitudes and emotions, not easy to summarise, but one recurrent impression is the inadequacy of the notions of 'anxiety' and 'strategy' as commonly used by diary researchers. The informants are all articulate and self-aware, and not in need of 'life-changing' advice.*

## 1. Introduction

This paper describes part of a research project in which volunteers, self-selected from IALS students preparing for one or more of the 'Cambridge' examinations – Cambridge Proficiency in English (CPE), Cambridge Advanced English (CAE), or First Certificate in English (FCE) – kept diaries, following guidelines provided by the researchers, reflecting on their in-class and out-of-class experiences (and problems/questions) in the 8 weeks leading up to the exams, and also attended 4 meetings with the researchers, at 2-weekly intervals, with an open agenda allowing amplification of diary entries, discussion of questions or problems, and giving and asking for advice. The resulting data consists of the diaries themselves, audio-tapes of the four meetings, and 'coding sheets' containing detailed summaries (based on the recordings) and classification of everything said at the meetings. The main aims were to help the participating students, to assist the researchers in conducting their classes and giving out-of-class advice, to provide suggestions for future students, and to illuminate in a (tentatively) generalisable way the behaviour of students preparing for exams, including (very tentatively) possible differences between more and less successful students. The present article discusses only the diaries; the meetings will be reported separately but require mention here because, as will be seen, the diarists themselves cross-refer.

## 2. Literature review I: diary research

Kathleen Bailey (e.g. Bailey 1983) is the name most associated with diary studies in foreign language learning. In Allwright and Bailey (1991) pp. 171-184, she does not really explain the methodology of diary studies, but instead presents results, largely in anecdotal form, from herself and fellow linguists, under the headings of receptivity, anxiety, competitiveness, self-esteem, parent-child-adult roles in the classroom, and motivation. Some of the salient points made were as follows:

1. John Schumann reported himself as being 'unreceptive' on a course in which he was forced to participate actively; he wanted to 'eavesdrop', and learn in his own way. Francine Schumann was similarly 'unreceptive' to self-instruction materials and preferred learning from story books for native speakers.

2. Many diarists report anxiety, which can in moderation be 'facilitating' but is often 'debilitating'. Bailey suggests that language learning is inherently likely to produce anxiety

because, for example, one can't avoid making mistakes and displaying incompetence on many levels, normal mechanisms for help are not available, and one's personality is inevitably partly hidden or distorted: 'language shock' can be compared to schizophrenia. Even speaking too well can cause problems with one's peer-group.

3. The Schumanns, and others, sometimes found themselves becoming childishly competitive, leading in turn to frustration and reduced effort.

4. Heyde's work suggests a connection between poor language performance and low self-esteem, though it is unclear which, if either, is the cause, which the effect. Also, even innocent behaviour like asking someone to repeat can be a 'put-down' or blow to self-esteem.

5. Ideas from (or explicable in terms of) transactional analysis (Harris 1967), especially 'learner as child, adult or parent', occur independently in many diaries.

6. Learners with integrative motivation tend to be more active in class, but there is no clear evidence that they learn better.

Although Bailey's work (and her reports of others' work) on diaries have been very enriching for the language teaching profession, there are problems if one tries to use it directly to inform one's research. The best known diary evidence is actually in the form of 'journals' produced by language-teaching professionals, all unusually sophisticated, articulate etc. Teachers who ask their learners to write diaries, or even write their own, are very likely to be disappointed and think they have done something wrong. Moreover, Bailey and her colleagues do not, at least in their most widely available work, give detailed guidelines for setting up diary research and coping with the many problems and issues arising. Perhaps for this reason, there have been thousands of small diary studies, many at master's dissertation or similar level, which suffer from serious design weaknesses: many of these studies are imitative, repetitive, of doubtful validity and not very illuminating.

Parkinson and Howell-Richardson 1989 (henceforth PH89), and Howell-Richardson and Parkinson 1988 (henceforth HP88), reported earlier IALS diary research. PH89, like Bailey, found plentiful examples of anxiety and other apparently dysfunctional feelings and behaviours:

'Am I studying wrong?' (p.132)
'Other students can listen and reading better than me.' (p.131)
'When it's difficult to speak, I isolate myself.' (p.132)
'I feel angry at myself, when I stick at easy situations.' (p.132)

There were also many other kinds of comments, including praise of teachers, requests for changes in teaching, resolutions to act differently or do better, reports of success and helpful advice for posterity:

'(The teacher) is interested in our progress.' (p.131)
'I am very "weak" in grammar, what I don't think we pay much attention on it' (p.131)
'I have to try go out' (p.32)
'I covered the subtitles. It's amazing how much you can concentrate hard if you need to.' (p.131)
'I advocate the use of rehearsal aloud with as critical an ear as possible.' (p.132)

The companion article (HP88) was, however, quite critical of typical diary study methodology, including our own, and suggested that there were often problems of ethics and validity due to tension and confusion between the various possible purposes of diaries, which we listed as follows:

a) to identify and attempt to allay debilitating anxiety;
b) to offer advice on specific learning difficulties;
c) to provide a basis for counselling in individualised study techniques;
d) to provide a basis for formative feedback on independent project work;
e) to encourage learners to assess their own performance in specific linguistic areas and self-prescribe remedial action;
f) to encourage similar self-analysis and action in relation to target language behaviour, especially in out-of-class activities (e.g. maximising native-speaker contact).

(HP88:75)

After criticising the confusion of purposes in our own studies, we concluded as follows:

> Diary studies can be immensely useful for pedagogical purposes, for course evaluation and for basic research. Even our own study, which was in many ways badly thought out and executed, yielded clear benefits in all three areas, and, most important, was considered worthwhile and even enjoyable to varying extents by most of those who participated. Nonetheless, we are far more cautious about diaries now than when we started the project. We feel that the recent enthusiasm for diaries within the profession, sparked off it seems mainly by works such as Bailey 1983 in which professional language teachers reflect on their own anxieties in going back to the classroom, has been rather excessive. 'Ordinary' FL students cannot be expected to show the same enthusiasm for diaries unless there is 'something in it for them'. This means careful planning, for without such planning the result will be, from the research/evaluation perspective, no usable data, and, from the pedagogic perspective, disruption and disappointment.
>
> In particular, the attraction of anxiety-based explanations for student problems can lead to simplistic analysis, and to teachers/researchers 'playing at psychology' in a way which may be positively harmful.
>
> Anxiety does not feature on our list of predictor variables, which does not mean that it should be ignored – we have probably simply failed to identify and sub-categorise it well enough – but rather that it interacts with a range of more mundane factors which we may be professionally better equipped to do something about.
>
> (HP88: 79)

These criticisms have not really been answered, and it would seem that since 1988 academic work on learner diaries has moved forward very little. In the more prestigious journals, articles on diaries are now mostly about teacher diaries, or 'logs' kept by teacher 'trainees', or occasionally, in the Schumann tradition, teacher as learners (Ahrens 1993). Local journals and working papers do sometimes contain competent but anecdotal reports of small-scale experiments which teachers and learners seem to have enjoyed, but attempts to demonstrate something more substantial have been few and unconvincing.

One example must suffice. Halbach (2000) is among many writers hoping to use diaries as a window on 'strategy' use, and she claims that her better students were more able to respond to learner training and increased the range of strategies used, thus moving even further ahead of weaker classmates. In her penultimate paragraph, pessimistically but reasonably, she argues that her data support Cummings' (1981) view that:

> there exists a threshold level of proficiency in the L2 below which strategy acquisition is not possible. If this, as it seems, is the case with the weaker students, we are facing a vicious circle: weaker students do not have enough strategies to help them with language learning, but at the same time, they are not proficient enough to benefit from strategy training, since they cannot use these strategies in their L2. This, in turn, means that they will not be able to speed up their learning with the help of their strategies.
>
> (p.93)

But the article continues and concludes somewhat lamely:

> Unfortunately, this issue leads us too far at this stage, but further work is needed to find out whether a threshold level like this really exists.
>
> What does become apparent is the need for strategy training in specific areas. We have seen that weaker students seem to lack a critical self-awareness (i.e. the strategies of self-monitoring and self-evaluation), while successful students have developed these together with the abilities to take advantage of any learning situation, to use all available resources and to select appropriate follow-up activities to deal with their problems. It could thus be that an effective learner-training, at least with the type of student that took part in this study, needs to focus especially on these aspects. Again, space prevents me from going into further detail, but it might be worth pursuing this line of research further.
>
> (ibid.)

This comes close to a non-sequitur, and there is also cause for concern when one looks back to find the kind of evidence on which Halbach's conclusions are based. It seems to consist of diary entries such as the following, presumably from two different students (pp. 86-87):

| **Date and Activity** | **Problem** | **Follow-up** |
|---|---|---|
| 20 February 1996 | I have had problems when I have started reading the novel | Firstly, I am going to try to pay more attention to what I am reading. |
| Reading *The Scarlet Letter* | My problem deals with the vocabulary of the novel because it is a little difficult to understand. | Secondly, I am going to look for some indispensable words in the dictionary. |

| **Date** | **Activity** | **Problems** | **Follow-up** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7.5.96 | Reading<br>Making syntax essays. | I have not had any problems with the resolutions of the exercises to make the essays. | - |

Like many diary researchers, Halbach is aware of some threats to the validity of her research, especially that the better students simply write more, but seems less aware of others, especially of 'normative responses', the tendency of respondents to say what they think researchers are looking for. One might wonder if the informants of Halbach and some other diary researchers are not perhaps thinking in effect: "You want anxiety? We'll give you anxiety! You want more strategies? We'll give you more strategies!" This might have been mitigated by a more (loosely) ethnographic approach, keeping more of the students' 'own voices'.

## 3. Literature Review II – other areas

Another set of influences on our research may be summed up by the slogan 'diary as dialogue'. It is now widely recognised that all research which depends upon written responses engages the respondent in a kind of dialogue with the 'implied reader', usually identical with the question setter, involving unspoken questions such as 'What do they mean?' 'What do they want?' 'What will they think of me?' As Low (1991) points out, even an anonymous postal questionnaire, superficially much less personal than a diary, inevitably has this dialogic and interpersonal dimension; the researchers cannot eliminate it, and can only seek to make the questionnaire as valid as possible, incorporating or simulating features of a good conversation, such as offering personal introductions and links, 'giving (psychological)

rewards for answer', and 'coming out of frame' (e.g. by 'chatting'). In our own research the dialogic/interpersonal dimension is, if not greater, at least more overt, due to at least three factors: the inherent difference between diaries and questionnaires, the fact that diary writing went hand-in-hand with meetings (see below), and the fact that the researchers also taught and talked to the subjects extensively almost every day. For these reasons, it seemed sensible to regard diary entries, not as 'mere' units of information, but as moves in a conversational game, having many functions beside the 'merely' informative and to be taken, not with a pinch of salt, but as part of a wider picture, even as a 'continuation of the meetings by other means'. This meant that we should seek to be aware of as many perspectives as possible from discourse analysis (DA), conversational analysis (CA), interaction analysis (IA), L2 pragmatic development and the various schools of ethnography and ethnomethodology, especially Mehan (e.g. 1979), Erickson (e.g. 1982) and Cazden (e.g. 1988). To incorporate all these perspectives in one study would be impractical, but they have influenced in a general way our choice of analytical procedures and categories, as well as providing anecdotal material which illuminated our data: in the case of L2 pragmatic development, for example, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1991:47f) account (reproduced in part in Kasper 2001: 507-8) of an East Asian student, asking endless repetitive questions to avoid a single 'impolite' statement, is certainly not identical to, but helps understanding of, some of the behaviour encountered in the group meetings, and possibly some diary entries too.

The third and final research tradition of major importance for this study is action research (hereafter AR). Lewin (1946) appears to be the seminal paper, and Elliott and Adelman (1976) and Stenhouse (1975 (in part) and 1979) are perhaps the best-known early works, whilst Hopkins (1993: 44) offers a good short survey of other early writers plus five(!) definitions of AR. Although Parkinson et al. (1981) describes itself (p.11) as "closely related to the type of work known as 'action research'", AR became well known in Applied Linguistics and FLT circles only much later, mainly through the work of Allwright (e.g. Allwright and Bailey 1991: 42 ff), and later still through the collection of articles in Edge and Richards (eds.) 1993.

The defining features of AR (in FLT) are that it involves teachers, with or without outside help, researching innovations in their own classroom, and that the primary objective is to achieve the best possible results in this classroom; reporting for an outside audience is important but secondary, and there can be no question of control groups, of continuing something that 'isn't working' or generally using learners as 'guinea pigs'. Kemmis and Henry (1989:2, quoted in Allwright and Bailey 1991:44) define AR as:

> a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out

Strickland (1988:760), again quoted in Allwright and Bailey (ibid.), describes AR as following a series of repeated steps:

> 1) identify an issue, interest or problem; 2) seek knowledge; 3) plan an action; 4) implement the action; 5) observe the action; 6) reflect on your observations; and 7) revise the plan. The cycle then begins once more.

Strictly speaking, our research differed slightly from the AR paradigm as given above, in that we did not plan in advance to do anything new in our teaching, except to give out the diaries and hold the meetings, and to act on information received: the research itself was the innovation. Nevertheless, we feel that our work falls squarely within the AR tradition, much

more than within the other traditions discussed above: our first concern was to help the cohorts of learners writing the diaries, our second to help future cohorts, and only after securing this did we (and do we) seek the generalisability of research reports, which for this kind of research resides not in level of statistical significance but in providing details (Geertz's 'thick description') of our contexts, so that readers who have similar classes can judge for themselves its likely relevance to their context. As Parkinson et al. (1981: 10) explain:

> There is no guarantee that our conclusions are generalisable beyond the context of this particular work. We hope and believe that such generalisation will be possible, but it will consist, not in rigorous statistical demonstration of causality, but in individuals perceiving a possible relevance to their own situation and trying out similar ideas themselves.

## 4. Procedures and participants

We invited students who were studying for any of the Cambridge examinations to take part in the study. They were asked to keep a diary during the weeks leading up to the exams, in which they recorded anything which they thought interesting or relevant to their English learning in general and preparation for the exam in particular. They were told (in a handout):

> You could write about what happens in your classes (not just the exam preparation class), what you do outside classes, how you feel about your progress, how you feel about English, why you decided to take the exam in the first place... We want to leave it up to you.

The diarists were provided with an empty exercise book, and told they could write as much or as little as they wanted. It was made clear that the diaries would not be completely private; not only would their class teacher (who was also, in each case, one of the researchers) read them and give feedback, but all three researchers would read them prior to our informal lunch-time meetings.

The students handed in their diaries four times during the term, and we had four meetings on the basis of them. Five students chose to participate at the outset, but only three continued for the whole term, so it was decided to focus our discussion of the diaries on those three.

## 5. Yuko

Yuko (all names have been changed – see acknowledgement) is a Japanese student. She begins her first entry by outlining her reasons for enrolling for the exams: she wanted to be pushed to study, and especially to speak - "I always shrink away from speaking English" - as she knows she *has* to speak in order to pass. She also felt she would be forced to work at grammar, and extend her repertoire of written English *genres*. And she would increase her confidence in her English improvement if she could get "a visible result".

She later reveals her main reason for participating in the research: again, the meetings would afford "good opportunities to force myself to speak English" (whereas the actual writing of the diaries was not something she considered difficult or daunting).

When a fellow-participant voiced a feeling that she was beginning to forget her L1, Yuko said she couldn't imagine that happening to her, but "If I begin to forget Japanese, that will be the time I can admit that my English is good".

About **reading in English**, she says she has increased the amount she reads - the newspaper every Saturday, one simplified book per week - always looking for something which captures her interest - in the hope that this will improve both her "speed of reading and accuracy of understanding". She prefers the *Daily Mail* or *Scotsman*; one day she bought the *Guardian*, but "I couldn't feel any familiarity with its topic and style"; however, it helped her feel sleepy!

She enjoyed reading *The Remains of the Day*, because the story was already familiar to her. In general she enjoys reading books, seeing films, listening to music, and watching TV, and is glad if by doing things she enjoys she can improve her English painlessly, "without being forced and bored".

Regarding the exams, she considers reading to be the least problematic section; despite memory problems, and not understanding everything, she manages (in practice tests) to get enough correct answers to pass, without running out of time.

On the other hand, one classroom activity, consisting of reading an article quickly then telling a partner what they remember, was "one of the most frightening moments for me....It was horrible and I was about to cry". She suggests repeating the activity informally, by choosing an article from a newspaper and telling a friend about it, to overcome this fear; and comforts herself that, in the exam, she will be able to read the texts more than once.

With **writing** one of her perceived problems is gauging style: achieving the required degree of (in)formality ("Maybe I don't understand what is formal"). Another problem, mentioned several times, is timing, though she says that she has difficulties writing to a time limit in Japanese as well. She attributes her problems partly to the time she spends on planning, though she still sometimes deviates from her plan in mid-stream because she thinks of another idea - she ends this section with "I want to be more intelligent".

On one occasion, she reports feeling happy about a poem she wrote in English, in which she included quotes from her favourite songs (particularly by *Queen)* and from a newspaper. She describes her habit of noting down :

> sentences and expressions which I thought "How beautiful it is" or "It must be useful"....I often use these sentences and expressions when I write English. I feel happy when I find a opportunity to use them.

Sometimes she uses new expressions inappropriately, but she recognises that, while receiving many corrections can be a little disheartening, it is necessary to make mistakes in order to learn: "I should make the most of the advantages of making mistakes".

In a later entry, she describes her method of writing a film review: she printed out a review from the Internet before writing her own; she did not copy the original, but "I borrowed some good sentences" and "modelled the structure", to produce, in her own words, "a faintly fine work!" She is still concerned, though, that she repeats words and expressions in her writing due to insufficiently wide vocabulary.

Time is also cited as a problem when she talks about the **Speaking** exam: the issue here is not having time to prepare what she is going to say. "If I can't think of anything to say in the real test, it's a real nightmare". She tells herself that what she needs are "enthusiasm and determination for speaking", and "B. said that silence was an enemy. For me, it's so strong that I hardly knock it down". She explains why she asked for Asian partners in the Speaking exam: she feels inhibited by the fluency of European students ("I often feel as if I'm pressed to speak

fast"), and she finds European pronunciation hard to understand (while acknowledging that her own pronunciation is Japanese).

She reports on having to make a 30-second speech in class, after having time to plan; contrary to her teacher's instructions, she wrote complete sentences rather than notes; while acknowledging "I know this is a bad thing", it enables her to speak without hesitation.

Doing a speaking practice with her exam partner, she found she was able to start talking fairly quickly. "I finally understood that I have to throw my disgrace away". Watching the Cambridge video of a Speaking exam was useful, as it gave her an idea of what the exam was like. During a speaking practice in class, she had difficulty "finding an opportunity to insert my words into someone's speaking. Even when I want to speak, if my partners look like going on their words, I tend to wait time for them to finish". She concludes with a graphic impression of the stressfulness of speaking a foreign language:

> Communicating in English is tiring. I have to listen to others and understand what they said. I also have to think about my answer and English sentences. I have to do these things endlessly during conversation. I can't have a rest and others don't wait. This is the difference between writing and speaking.

In **listening** she considers her ability to be poor, though she is not sure of the reasons; she says, for example, that when note-taking she takes down less important points rather than main points; "I want to exchange my ears to native speakers!" She does, however, report some successes. She is pleased that she understood much of what was said when she went on a guided tour of Glasgow Art School. On another occasion, her disappointment when Italy (her favourite team) lost a football match is counterbalanced by her pleasure at having understood the news, as, when she first arrived, she couldn't understand the radio at all. She took both of these events as indications that her listening skill had improved.

> Maybe the more I listen to English, the better my listening becomes. However, how long will it take me to listen to English correctly???

Regarding the Listening exam, she reports one of her problems is with spelling; and while she thinks about the spelling, she loses the thread of the tape. She is worried that the coursebook texts seem fairly easy, so decides to try an actual practice test, and finds it very difficult.

She reports on communication problems outside the classroom, when buying a baked potato, or renting a video; when she doesn't understand, she says "yes" or "no", and the transaction is sometimes successful. Another time, she has difficulties understanding a local person who delivered a parcel; this reinforces her feeling that she is not integrated:

> I'm living in Edinburgh but I'm studying English in an isolated world...I don't even try to jump into the real world. My motivation is not enough strong to take a risk. However, I will be satisfied if I get good results in examinations.

She describes how her vocabulary learning strategies have changed: she used to "scrawl" words in her textbooks and notebooks and fail to revise them; (here, she notes wryly that "There must be a proper reason for everything happening in the world"). Now, however, she has a dedicated vocabulary notebook, and revises at weekends. She reflects on how to decide which of the many new words she meets she has to remember for exam purposes. "I know I have to learn some formal words, but which ones? I know I have to study phrasal verbs, but which ones?" She also regrets her inability to remember collocations.

Working towards the **English in Use** paper, even at FCE level, makes her "suspicious of my knowledge of English"; elsewhere, she says she is "suffering from English in Use", and later again exclaims "If only there wasn't Use of English in Cambridge exams". She says she frequently makes mistakes with articles and prepositions, which are among the grammatical areas tested in Part 3. She believes that prepositions should be learned alongside the verbs and nouns they co-occur with, but that with articles the only remedy is practice, as she has learned the actual rules many times over; "I've made such many mistakes that I've been sick of them". She also describes her difficulties with the Word Formation section: "At first, I really had no idea, so I was like a person who was frozen". Nevertheless, she concludes on a somewhat positive note: "My road to the Cambridge exams is full of difficulty... However...I should tackle my problems rather than cry over the lack of English ability". After a conversation with a flatmate who had passed FCE previously, she resolves to "work on practice tests over and over again".

**On dictionary use** she recalls that a teacher has advised her against using a Japanese-English dictionary, and her reaction is "Although I really trust him, I'm opposed to this advise"; however, she recognises the inherent problems, and uses a monolingual dictionary to check. "Japanese-English dictionary and English-English dictionary are the best friends of my English study"; she has given up using an English-Japanese dictionary.

On the subject of **her mother tongue**, she describes the problem of translating everything she hears and reads into Japanese. Later, she reflects about Japanese characters, and the fact that Japanese people do not normally use Romaji (Roman) script when writing, and find it hard to read texts written in Romaji ; she wonders whether not being used to dealing with an alphabet could contribute to her inability to read fast in English, and to her problems with writing in English. On a later occasion, she comments on how interesting it is for her to see British audiences' reactions to Japanese films; she laughs when they don't, and vice versa. She listens to the dialogue while reading the sub-titles, but feels that the latter don't capture the original accurately; "I feel there's a nuance between the sub-titles and the dialogue". This leads her to wonder if it is possible for her to "express all of what I think in Japanese in English".

She concludes one instalment with admiration for friends of hers who socialise more and who are now going to do voluntary work, "While I am still standing on the same as where I started, they are running far ahead of me". She perceives them as making more progress in listening and speaking, while she stays at home with radio and books; "That's my style, but I need to change it temporarily and force to speak English....This page seems rather the words for counsellors than learning diary!!"

One day in particular, she reports feeling good, and being able to speak a lot in class because she felt like speaking. "I wish every day would be like today". She says she feels down easily, and this makes her "irresponsible" and "irritated by myself", especially before exams. However, she says "I can get rid of irritation by my own way (because I've been with my personality for 25 years!!) and my friends always help me". She goes on to say how helpful it is for her to keep a diary, in which she can express the thoughts she finds it difficult to express verbally. "I'm not confident that my diary is useful for your research but it is definitely useful for me".

On another positive day, it occurs to her that so many of the things she has been doing here are things that she had never or rarely done in Japan:

> Have I ever written letters of complaint? No. Have I ever written reviews or articles? No! Have I ever written compositions about controversial issues? Never!! Have I understood all articles on newspapers

> in Japanese? Definitely no!!... Today's conclusion is: I don't need to be so depressed if I can't write well and understand quickly!!

She also reports two enjoyable social occasions at other students' houses - something she tends to avoid because of her fear of communicating; "But communicating is enjoyable, isn't it?... everybody helps me.... I'm really lucky being surrounded by nice people! Because of them I can prevent myself from dropping out of studying here".

Regarding **the research meetings**, she begins her second instalment by saying that she found the first meeting stressful but good, because the participants could exchange problems, opinions, and solutions. In her last instalment, she apologises for not answering questions properly in the meeting; "I need longer time to start speaking and, while speaking, often loss my word". She feels "down and irritable", thinking about how long she has been studying English, and comparing herself with other students. "Unfortunately, I seem to like comparing and always want anything I don't have but others have"; "I need longer time to get my ideas in shape". She feels "childish", lacking in intelligence and opinions. "I've been struggling with not only English but also the difference in the way of thinking or education, that is, maybe, the difference in culture". She sometimes does feel good, but it is only temporary.

Her comments about the exam class are positive - it is "really suitable", she can keep up with the class "except speaking"; she also explains why she changed to a lower level class at another time of day: because she found the class she was in too difficult, and she does not agree that the challenge of a higher level class is good, at least for herself: "I am not the kind of person who can work furiously and never give up".

On **tests:** before sitting the FCE and CAE, she took the IELTS test for the second time, and found it less tiring because she knew what to expect. However, time constraints - the need to work quickly in exam conditions - still have a negative effect on her: "I become impatient and can't work calmly.... I need more time to do anything than others need". She couldn't face classes after receiving the results. To express her disappointment with her results, she quotes the words of a favourite song:

> I get up and die a little, I got no feel and no rhythm, I just keep losing my beat!

Instead, she spent the morning thinking about the positive parts (improved scores in Listening and Reading). Later in the day she went to see a subtitled film, which she enjoyed - "I think it's important to do something just for a change. I'm sorry I became too emotionally today".

Two days before the FCE/CAE exams, she says:

> My irritation exploded finally. I threw my textbook against the wall, flung my dictionary against the floor and sobbed for nearly one hour. It is usual for me before examination. It's really good to have a good long cry. I feel refreshed and feel like smiling wryly at my foolishness.

And on the eve of the exam she writes, "Give up. Give up! Give up!!" She had thought she might have stood a chance of passing the CAE, but now she felt that even passing the FCE was an unrealistic goal. She decided to do a little studying, but above all to get a good sleep.

However, on the day of the FCE, she did not feel nervous. She finished the reading paper in good time but, as she revised, started to feel that "every answer was wrong". She also managed to finish the Writing paper, but "the problem is quality, task achievement". The Use

of English seemed a little easier than the practice papers, but still "I'm not confident of my answers".

She is sure she has failed the CAE. She couldn't concentrate during the Reading paper (she feels the biggest difference in level of difficulty between the two exams lies in this paper). She finished the Writing paper in time, but worried again about "task achievement", as she didn't organise it well; she was, however, pleased to find that a job application letter was one of the options, as that was the task she felt more confident about when revising. "As for English in Use, I wrote down something without certainty." Despite her prognosis, she says she is not depressed, and will recover quickly from feeling down when she receives the result. "I have got used to failing exams."

In her penultimate entry, she summarises **how she prepared for the exams**. Speaking: "I'm ashamed that I haven't made any efforts for speaking. I, however, try to start speaking as quickly as I can". Reading: tips given in class were useful, and doing practice tests; ultimately each student has to "find one's own way, that is most suitable way, by themselves". Also "I learned that depending on my feeling or intuition too much is extremely dangerous!!" Writing: there is a "pattern" for each *genre*, so she studied the structure of each and memorised often-used phrases; simply practising a lot is less important than looking at corrections and learning from mistakes. Listening: her recent strategy is to read the questions rather than listening to instructions, otherwise the tape starts before she has finished reading. Use of English: she should have built her vocabulary more and memorised words together with prepositions; "I couldn't overcome my laziness"; "looking back upon my preparation is good because I can find out what was lacked. However, I'd like to forget about exams for a while."

In the final entry, she reflects on her English learning in general: she feels she has done her best, in most areas except speaking; "in order to improve speaking, I have to be more interested in people". She has listened and read a lot, and "written many tasks. Considering that I rarely wrote something in English before I came here, the number of my writing tasks is amazing!!" Studying in Edinburgh has been "the greatest experience I've ever had".

"I'm proud of keeping diary every day. I think that I did my minimum duty.... Thank you for reading my diary and giving me useful advice. Thank you!!"

### 6. Sandrine

Sandrine, a Swiss student, says in her first entry that she is generally happy with her progress. She now understands people better, for instance. She says her classes at IALS are useful, providing a basis for independent work later in the day. As an example, she mentions typing up work already corrected by the teacher as a useful activity: "it's a good way of making the best of the bit that's already been done". She doesn't want to concentrate too much on exam practice, which is not her prime goal.

She cites **reading** as her preferred activity: newspapers and fiction. At the beginning of the study, she is reading a book of short stories; she claims to be a slow reader, and hasn't yet read a complete novel in English. However, by the second instalment, she has bought and read *The Accidental Tourist* by Anne Taylor, one of the set texts for the Proficiency exam, which gives her a sense of achievement, as does subsequently watching and understanding the film adaptation.

Later, she describes reading another novel, *A Patchwork World* by the same author, which she finds interesting from the language point of view, as it contains a great deal of slang and colloquial language. And she reports that her class have started reading *Dr Fischer from Geneva or the Bomb Party*, which she is finding hard to put down, so it's a "very good choice of reading".

On **speaking,** she feels she still has problems finding the right words "on the spot". She wishes she could express herself more effectively:

> The more time goes, the more I realise that one can't speak just to practise his/her English. Above all, one speaks to communicate, to express feelings, opinions and ideas. That implies a whole relational context that often lacks here. Knowing people better, as well as learning a language, demands patience and a lot of time. That's not always easy to accept.

To improve her speaking ability, she seeks opportunities to talk to native speakers, for example her host family and language exchange partners, which she also regards as a way of learning more about Edinburgh life and culture. She describes a visit to the cinema with a native speaker friend, and the discussion they had afterwards, noting that they "share a passion for words. She likes to explain meanings, to compare different ways of expressing things, so that we often end up speaking about the language more than just getting ideas across." She reflects on whether she appreciates different qualities in an English speaker than in a French speaker; "Perhaps it makes me discover other personalities, new characters".

She decides to seek a work placement for the summer, and describes two interviews which she attended. In the first, one of the interviewers was French but spoke excellent though accented English, which made her think that "after all, it's not impossible"; she liked the people and work atmosphere, and she felt the job would give her plenty of opportunity to speak English "specially on the phone (which is horrible but useful). In the second she met "a saint", an artist who runs an art centre in a very deprived area; she concludes "the placement would have been a rich human experience.... but, finally, I chose the first one".

Regarding **listening**, she doesn't often watch TV, preferring to listen to the radio, which she switches on the minute she wakes up. She also likes cinema, and often goes to see a film. However, she describes one rather disappointing experience of watching a TV film in American English with a lot of slang, which she found difficult to understand.

For **vocabulary**, she copies out words that she has learnt during a lesson into a special vocabulary notebook. She selects the words she wants to remember, but says that she has to hear, read and write a word over and over in different contexts before she can remember it - and even then "remember it still doesn't mean using it when I speak". She feels that context is crucial here:

> For example, we learn a new word during a lesson and I write it down. In my mind, its meaning is associated to that context. Then, if I hear it again, on the radio or TV or in a conversation, I'm able to broaden the meaning, to feel it better, and to precise my first definition.

She talks about the similarity between many English words and their French or Italian equivalents, causing them to sound familiar, but reflects that this similarity is only helpful for understanding, not for production; and she gives an example of a false friend (*proprement*)... "so it helps in a way to have similar sounds/ words in my mother tongue, but its also an illusion".

In her last instalment, written after the exams, she says her current feeling is that "it's hard for me to absorb new things"; she often looks up something which is "not unknown but not known either, they are in a sort of limbo-space - in-between words", only to realise she has looked it up already several times. She recalls previously being more systematic about writing down and memorising new words, but now she just goes on,

> like you would do amid people you don't really want to speak to. You avoid them, or wave discreetly, pretending you're late... Yes, it's a kind of diplomatic and uncomfortable relationship at the moment. I guess patience is the only remedy.

She often refers to her knowledge of German; in the first entry, she talks about how it seems to be declining, while admitting that she thinks learning more than one foreign language helps the acquisition of other languages, partly simply because of the similarity of certain words, but also because the whole process is not new.

> I've already experienced the feeling of despair you get when you're faced to a foreign language. This horrible feeling that things lose their substance when you tell them in that language. ... Or even ... simple issues, like speaking about personal things, getting closer to people.... The relationships seem not to change, not to deepen, like fruits which remain unripe.

She expresses a worry that once she returns home, her English knowledge will "shrink to a more or less superficial knowledge", as has happened with her German - in German, she now feels "lost for words" just writing a letter to a friend.

She looks forward to a visit from her boyfriend, and thinks it will be nice to speak French; then finds she sometimes finds herself translating from English.

> For example, I can't find any appropriate word for ..."to enjoy". In English you "enjoy" everything, whereas in French you would use different words to express it, depending on the context.

Regarding **exam preparation**, she confesses in her second instalment to not having done a lot of work specifically for the exam, but intends to do more as the deadline approaches. Generally, she prefers the CPE tasks to the CAE ones, finding them "less superficial, less based on speed"; although she comments that some of the tasks - the gap-filling part of the Reading paper and the Use of English - give her "the feeling of being trapped: either I know or I don't, nothing to really think about".

In the event, when she sat the exams, she found that (as she expected) neither CAE nor CPE were easy. The CAE reading paper was "a complete stress" which put her off her stride for the next two papers. The CPE Use of English was hard, particularly the section involving reformulating sentences, as sometimes "even the ones which were familiar to me were difficult because I couldn't remember the exact use".

She begins her last instalment by saying that although it has been quite a busy week "I from far prefer that to being idle and hanging about". The term is nearly over, and she describes her dislike of the "end atmosphere", when

> everyone wants to go back to his/her country, everyone is fed up. It resembles an after-party atmosphere, when people leave one after the other, the men have untightened their ties and the make-up of the girls is faded. Personally, I'm bad at ... in-between moments...

She also reports feeling a mixture of apprehension and pleasure at going home.

She concludes by talking about her life in Scotland, saying that one of the difficult aspects is having to adapt, "to find a way of life that suits you". Although it is temporary, you establish new habits and relationships, while keeping up with your life at home, in the knowledge that you will return eventually. Without her Swiss boyfriend keeping her up-to-date with news from home, she says, she might have felt in "a kind of … no-woman's land".

### 7. Haruo

Haruo, a Japanese student, dwells a lot on his perceived difficulties in several areas.

Concerning his perceived lack of **reading** ability, he thinks he might tend to "recognise author's exaggeration and metaphoric ideas as the main idea". He believes he would do the same in Japanese, and recalls the advice of his mother, a Japanese mother-tongue teacher, to "read as many books as possible…. I think that what she said to me is the fastest way … to be good at reading".

He more than once expresses his worries about his speed when reading for gist, when doing a paragraph re-ordering task for example, though later in the same entry he describes being able to "get the main idea" in a limited time. He suspects that he may also lack this ability to read quickly for gist when reading in Japanese. He is concerned that his nervousness will impede his ability to deal with "tricky" multiple choice questions in the exam. "The key to success in reading section is how I can prevent myself from feeling upset." "I have no alternative but to reading as many articles as I could and to understand as much as possible".

He describes the same class activity described above by Yuko, that of reading an article and describing it to a partner. He feels he performed the task well as the passage was fairly easy, but worries a little that, when guessing meaning from context where it is expressed metaphorically, he adds too much of his own interpretation: "I tend to create the picture of the passage by myself"; something which he feels must be avoided in the exam.

He says in his final instalment, however, that reading is what he spends most time on, believing it to be the most "useful and beneficial" activity, "the most indispensable practice"; he goes on to list the advantages: "a variety of vocabulary", "models of good sentences", "information"; you have to "encounter good sentences if you would like to sophisticate your writing". He needs, however, "extraordinary patience" to look up every new word in the dictionary, which can be "overwhelming and exhausting"; however, if he is feeling motivated, he can enjoy reading for hours.

In **Writing,** he describes his problems with formality: he has little difficulty identifying whether a sample of writing is formal or informal, but does have problems when it comes to production. He plans to learn sets of formal phrases with their informal equivalents. Another writing problem he describes is:

> While rewriting, I noticed that the majority of my mistakes had occurred in the process of translating my idea in Japanese into the statement in English. Some of them are grammatically correct but they sound odd….. also…the usage of vocabulary is tough to manage and I am occasionally perplexed on what word I should choose so that the sentence can definitely represent my thought….. (I think) that I cannot write anything without translation in my mind.

In his last instalment, he describes how disheartening it is when a teacher corrects as "unclear or meaningless" a sentence which he had thought was "logical and clear in meaning" and which he had "made with a bit of confidence". He says he is always struggling to make his

writing readable, despite everything he has learnt about writing; "it is much easier said than done to try to use the accumulated knowledge consciously in an appropriate situation; it is easy to input, but very difficult to output."

On **listening,** he talks about the relative difficulty of understanding certain speakers, even when they are saying words that he knows, and wonders whether it is solely due to accent, intonation or whether there are other factors involved. Later he describes seeing a video in class regarding differences between Scottish and English, which amazed him; although he had realised there were differences, he now understood that "Scottish and English were totally different languages". He felt he could understand why he had been finding it so difficult to understand people, and says "I have to enhance my Scottish vocabulary to have conversation with elder Scots people."

Regarding the Listening exam, he notes a problem with losing concentration, leading him to miss some of the answers. He talks about the need to guess what people are saying, but to balance this - "I noticed ... that I might expand my guesses too much... and this could lead me to make some mistakes. I found it a really nasty habit..." Later he describes how, when simultaneously listening for understanding and looking at the questions, the latter distracts him from listening. Then, once he loses concentration, "the situation is in chaos". He reflects on the idea that the strategy and tactics needed to pass exams are separate from language ability, and wonders if he can acquire the necessary skills to listen and answer simultaneously.

On **speaking,** he discusses his tendency to think in Japanese first when speaking in English. "I have to think of everything I am going to say before beginning to speak. Some might suggest I ought to think everything in English, and convert my Japanese brain tissue into English...," but this is not easy. Several entries relate to an evening class in anthropology where he is the only non-native speaker: he reports being "almost dumb when having a discussion", whilst his classmates are talkative and don't require time to think, so "I am sort of helpless in the class." A week later he promises himself that he will say something, and manages to do so; this required extensive mental preparation, but he felt he had achieved his aim.

He worries about how much his confidence in his spoken English fluctuates; "when I could make myself understood when explaining difficult matters, I could easily become confident and seem to have my study going well; however, this is always vice versa"; "I have been struggling to have my self-confidence back since I have nearly lost it with my study". He describes how much easier it is to speak to one interlocutor than to more than one; the other person will wait for him to express his thoughts, whereas if he is the third party to the conversation, the other two can talk to each other and he can be excluded. Regarding the Speaking exam, he describes the difficulties he has when dealing with the picture description part: generally maintaining the flow, and specifically dealing with the problem of not recalling an appropriate word, and avoiding silences while thinking. He also reflects on the need to use more "sophisticated" words in order to get a higher mark; his plan is to try to use such words in everyday conversation.

He finds English **grammar** tough, after reviewing future forms in class which he had hitherto felt confident about; he had a similar experience with modal verbs in a later class. He discusses his disappointment at finding the Use of English paper harder than he expected.

He describes his difficulty in providing suitable phrasal verbs, when these do not exist in Japanese, and the seeming impossibility of the task of learning all such verbs in English. He worries here that he "might sound childish when facing difficulties"

In various entries, he reflects on **Japanese culture.** He discusses a reason he has read why Japanese speakers tend not to speak English very well: their obsession with grammar, their fear of making mistakes which inhibits them from speaking - "we find remaining silent better than making silly mistakes in front of others". While acknowledging that not all Japanese learners' difficulties with speaking can be attributed to their education system, "at least it has had a significant influence on ways of our thinking and our present behaviour in class". Later again he reflects on how far Japanese education has influenced his way of learning English; he has realised that there are many ways to learn a language, "some might be practical and efficient... some might be not". He ponders on why some people learn more quickly than others, and concludes that although he would prefer not to think so, it depends on "people's ability, and potential. It seems to me that there is more to it than aspirations."

He also talks about an article about the media (read in class) which shocked him: "the idea that Asian people were losing their own identity because of Western influence through media". He goes on to wonder whether he himself might not be losing his own, Japanese identity; in fact he had not thought much about being Japanese before reading it, but "it is not so easy to be obsessive with our culture as long as Japan has already got soaked with Western culture and we ourselves accept it."

In a later instalment, he talks about Japanese culture and politeness, which leads Japanese people always to be polite when speaking English; they would be polite even to close friends. He feels this makes him "eager to learn English used in formal context rather than one in informal conversation". While he recognises that the CAE exam requires the ability to deal with both formal and informal styles, he says "I have no intention to change my learning style".

As for our **research meetings**, Haruo describes his feelings about the first one in his second instalment - nervousness in anticipation, but then finding it "really beneficial" to share problems about language learning and discuss possible solutions; and it was "fun to have a friendly talk with teachers and other students".

He begins his third instalment with positive comments about the second meeting: "it was a great opportunity for me to express myself, to think about English as a language and above all, to get to know the picture how others are feeling about English." He still, however, feels he has difficulties really expressing what he is thinking in a foreign language; he describes this as a "war against languages":

> every time I express my opinion in English, I cannot do it without feeling that I am struggling with English. If I can connect what I have in mind to English structure spontaneously...my speaking ability will be getting better I suppose"

Finally, the exam: he felt "satisfied to some extent" with the Writing and English in Use, but found the Reading difficult because of time management. About the Speaking test, he reminds himself to "interact and to try to co-operate" with his partner, and to "memorise some useful phrases...to make myself look quite fluent in speaking... and come up with ideas how to prevent myself from being silent..."

## 8. Summary and conclusions

We were constantly moved and fascinated when reading these diaries - at their depth, their perceptiveness, eloquence, and humour. We felt very privileged at being granted access to these insights into the thoughts and feelings of these students and sharing their moments of despair and revelation. It is difficult further to abridge, and to draw conclusions from, such rich and varied material, but perhaps five general points can be made.

First, all our informants had thought a lot about at least some of the issues relating to their learning, and were actively reviewing their behaviour, analysing their strengths, weaknesses and preferences, and making principled choices. Although we recognise distortions due to the self-selection of the diarists and the consciousness-raising effects of the research, one might tentatively extrapolate and suggest that even 'average' students in 'normal' classes might have a wider and richer view of their learning than researchers sometimes imply.

Second, an outsider label such as 'strategies', though valid as a construct, fails to do justice to the choices made, especially outside the classroom. It is not a case of 'Shall I learn in more different ways?' but of hour-by-hour, moment-by-moment decisions on what, specifically, to do, with the common human struggle to overcome inertia, fears and inhibitions, be open to new experience, balance immediate and deferred pleasure.

Third, 'anxiety' as a construct likewise fails to do justice to what these students experience. It is undoubtedly present, but as part of something wider. Perhaps 'pressure' would be a better word for the variety of cognitive, affective and interpersonal demands on the individual, not all unpleasant, but together making the months leading up to the examination challenging, to say the least. The various losses, of language and of motivation, described most fully by Sandrine, are also an inevitable part of the picture. Also striking, though, were the balancing positive emotions such as hope, sense of achievement, self-discovery, pleasures of friendship and everyday living.

Fourth, whilst it is always tempting for a reader of such diaries to offer simplistic advice – Yuko, for example might be advised to 'get a life', 'go out more' or whatever – such advice is ultimately insensitive and fatuous, fails to respect individual personality and preferences, and goes against what is known about effective counselling. All diarists made such preferences clear in discussion and were certainly not looking for 'life-changing' advice – at the most, they would contemplate short-term surface changes to satisfy examiners. If advice is appropriate at all, it should be in the form of ideas for more things to do in the diarist's own preferred style.

Fifth and last, a comment on the 'truth' of the diaries. Were the diarists writing what they really felt, or were they 'giving us what we wanted', as we suggested above about some other studies? Ultimate truth is of course never demonstrable (though its opposite is sometimes apparent), and the best one can hope for is 'a' truth rather than 'the' truth, representing the informants' beliefs, as formulated for others, but never all their beliefs – see Cohen and Mannion 1994: 274-5, including their summary of Cicourel and Kitwood. With these particular students though, we sometimes sensed a slightly different truth, not just an account for us, but an account for the diarist, a 'finding out what I think', like a Vygotskyan internal monologue (though, of course, also very much in the tradition of 'literary' diaries). Thus Yuko's "Give up!" is certainly a real feeling, but also a move in a (very serious) game with herself, an adventure of the mind.

**Acknowledgement**: Our warmest thanks go to the three diarists quoted in the study. All have given consent for their diaries to be used. We have respected their wishes in not using their real names.

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# A DISCUSSION OF LANGUAGE TABLES FROM THE 2000 POPULATION CENSUS OF MAURITIUS

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*Abstract*

*Twelve languages – including the two prestigious colonial languages, English and French, a French-based creole and 'ancestral' languages, such as Hindi and Mandarin – are spoken on the multiethnic island Mauritius. Given the multilingual and multiethnic nature of the nation, linguistic practices are an important way for Mauritians to assert or construct their identities. The linguistic diversity of Mauritius has been considered in various censuses. The 2000 census questionnaire contained sections about 'linguistic group', 'language usually spoken in the home' and 'literacy'. In this paper, the 2000 census language tables related to 'linguistic group' and 'language usually spoken in the home' are discussed with reference to the current linguistic situation. The growing importance of Creole as both the language of the forefathers and the language usually spoken at home is discussed. The relatively important presence of English and French and the decreasing everyday use of Asian languages are highlighted. The final section of this paper suggests directions for further research on the language tables in the 2000 population census.*

## 1. Introduction*

In multilingual countries like Mauritius, census data regarding languages do not and cannot provide a complete and accurate description of the national linguistic situation. However, census data combined with knowledge of language beliefs and behaviours of the population can give the researcher an interesting insight into the language situation of a country. In this paper, I discuss the general tendencies and unexpected trends found in some of the language tables from the 2000 Population census of Mauritius using my native knowledge of Mauritian culture as a background. The paper is structured as follows: in the first part, the historical, demographic and linguistic situations are described; the second and third sections discuss the language questions of the census questionnaire and the responses to these questions, respectively. In the fourth part of this paper, I analyse the general tendencies found in the census reports. Finally, I highlight issues raised by the discussions and suggest avenues for further research on the census reports.

### 1.1 Mauritius and its people

The island of Mauritius, situated in the Indian Ocean some 800 kilometres from Madagascar, has a multiethnic population of approximately 1.2 million inhabitants. The multiethnic and multilingual characteristics of the island are due to successive waves of immigration from the 18th till early 20th centuries. The island was uninhabited before its first settlement, from 1598 to 1710 by the Dutch. From 1720 to 1810, Mauritius was a French colony; during the French colonisation, slaves were brought from Africa and

Asia. One of the languages spoken on the island at that time was a French-lexified creole, Mauritian Creole. In 1810, the British captured the island; although English replaced French as the language of administration and instruction, it was not as extensively used as French in everyday interactions (Stein 1997). Slavery was abolished under British rule and indentured labourers were brought from India; these labourers spoke a variety of languages, including Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telegu and Bengali. Bhojpuri was the most common language (Stein 1982). Traders from India and China also migrated to Mauritius in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries; the Indian traders spoke Gujerati or Kutchi (Hollup 1996) while the Chinese spoke Hakka or Cantonese (Stein 1982). By the middle of the 20th century, immigration became relatively rare in Mauritius. In 1968, Mauritius acquired independence, and in 1992 the country acceded to the status of Republic.

The ethnic composition of the population has not changed significantly since the end of immigration[1]. For official purposes, the population of Mauritius is divided into 4 groups: Hindus (52%), Muslims (17%), Sino-Mauritians (2%) and General Population (29%). The term *General Population* refers to the Coloured Population/Mulattos, Franco- and Afro-Mauritians.

The Indo-Mauritian group (Hindus and Muslims) makes up the largest segment of the population. The official Hindu group is further divided into Hindus (40%) and also Tamils (7%), Telegus (3%) and Marathis (2%). The Hindu/Tamil/Telegu/Marathi distinction is made on the basis of religious affiliations and ancestral languages (Eriksen 1998). The official category *Hindu* is therefore an umbrella-term for various other minority religious and linguistic groups. The Indo-Mauritian Muslim group consists of "Calcattias" (those whose ancestors came as labourers from Bihar), Surtees and Memans (Hollup 1996). These different Muslim groups identify with different ancestral languages, as shown in Figure 1 below.

The official term *General Population* is a cover-term which is not often used in daily interactions. The Afro-Mauritians are generally referred to as Creoles, where creole is usually characterised by a person's skin colour and also his use of Creole. Creole can also be used to refer to the mulattos who have dark skin. Some of the mulattos aspire to the French culture and way of life and do not want to be considered as Afro-Mauritians. Nonetheless, they are still generally rejected by the Franco-Mauritians. Because of their skin colour and their consistent use of the French language, the Franco-Mauritians form a distinct cultural and social group and are therefore not referred to as Creoles.

The Sino-Mauritians make up a small segment of the Mauritian population. It has been suggested that they have completely assimilated into the Mauritian lifestyle and have adopted Creole primarily (Stein 1986, Eriksen 1998).

Below is a diagram illustrating the linguistic affiliations of the various recognised ethnic/religious groups.

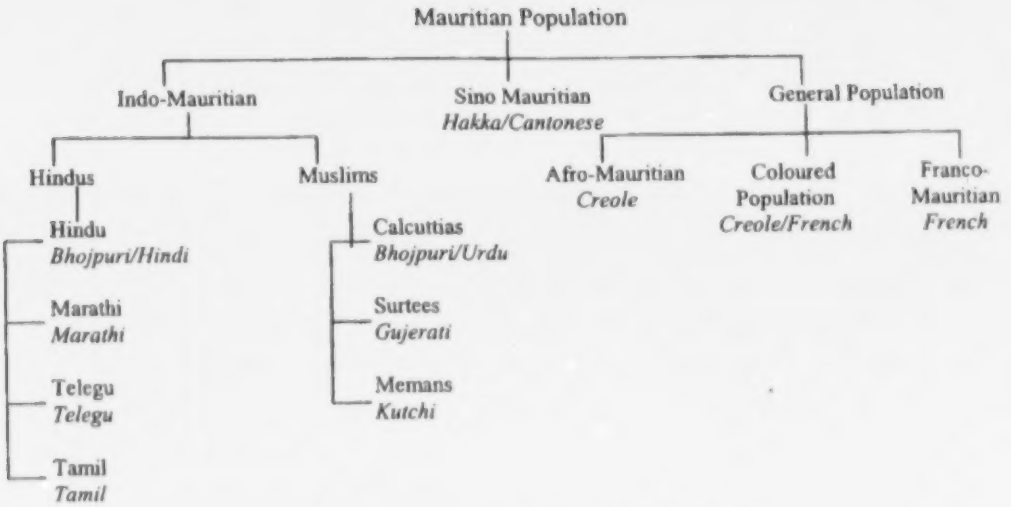


Figure 1.Ethnic groups and their linguistic affiliations in Mauritius.[2]

## 1.2 Linguistic situation

As Figure 1 suggests, each ethnic category is associated with at least one language. Most of the languages mentioned in Figure 1 are restricted to specific groups and are rarely used in daily interactions. It is claimed that Creole is the only language understood and spoken by all Mauritians (Stein 1986). However, Creole is stigmatised by some segments of the population because of its association with the economically and socially subordinate ethnic group, the *Creoles*.

French is, after Creole, the language most often used by Mauritians (Stein 1982). It is the native tongue of the Franco-Mauritians but has also become that of some Afro-, Sino- and Indo-Mauritians. Unlike Creole, French is taught at school. Creole and French are the two main inter-group languages. All the other languages in Figure 1 are restricted to in-group communication.

Bhojpuri differs from the other Asian languages in that it is the ancestral language of the descendants of both Hindu and Muslim indentured labourers. However, Bhojpuri is primarily an oral language and is considered as a patois in Mauritius (Stein 1986). It has been suggested that because of the stigma associated with Bhojpuri, and also its link with both Hindus and Muslims, the variety is not often claimed as an ancestral language (Moorghen & Domingue 1982). In order to be distinguished from each other, Hindus and Muslims claim Hindi and Urdu respectively, instead of Bhojpuri, as their ancestral languages (Stein 1986, Hollup 1996).

Missing in Figure 1 is the English language. English has been excluded from the above Figure because it is not associated with any ethnic group on the island. It is thought to be the only ethnically unmarked language in Mauritius (Eriksen 1998). Although English is the official language, the language of administration and instruction, it has never gained acceptance in Mauritian society as a language of everyday interaction. For most Mauritians, English is the language acquired at school (Stein 1997). Its use is restricted to formal domains. English and French are seen as prestigious languages indispensable to upward social mobility in Mauritius.

Languages in Mauritius can, therefore, broadly be classified into three groups: ancestral languages (Indian and Chinese languages) whose usage is limited, colonial languages (English and French) and language of everyday interactions (Creole).

## 2. Languages in the 2000 population census

The linguistic diversity of Mauritius was taken into consideration in the population censuses as early as 1931. The most recent population census was conducted in July 2000. The questionnaire for this census contained three sections related to languages:

1. *Linguistic group* (column 17) [3]

In this section, respondents were asked to state the language spoken by their ancestors. If the maternal and paternal ancestors spoke different languages, both were to be given.

2. *Language usually spoken* (column 18)

In this part of the questionnaire, interviewees were asked to state the language usually or most often spoken in their home.

3. *Languages read and written* (column 19)

The question for this section was as follows: 'In which language(s) can the person, with understanding, both read and write a simple statement in his/her everyday life?'

Respondents could put in any language as their ancestral language(s) and the language(s) most often used in the home; they were not given a list of specific languages to choose from. The following note was added at the end of each of the three sections: 'For census purposes, consider creole, bhojpuri etc as languages'.

In this paper, only responses to 'linguistic group' and 'language usually spoken' will be discussed. Also, 13.8% and 11.8% of the total population reported having two ancestral languages and using two languages at home, respectively, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all the findings reported, so I will limit the discussions to reports of single languages only, even though this restriction entails the loss of some of the richness of the data.

The approach adopted in this paper is mainly synchronic in that the 2000 language tables are discussed with respect to the current linguistic situation and comparisons with previous censuses are rarely made. General tendencies are discussed and unexpected findings are highlighted.

### 2.1 Ambiguity of language questions

In the 1962, 1972 and 1983 censuses, there were two language questions. The first question referred to the 'language currently/usually spoken in the home', and the second one referred to 'mother tongue'/ 'language of forefathers'. Instructions for the second question made the link between language and ethnicity clear. The remarks were as follows:

Column M – Languages. Mother Tongue – This is a very important question. It is intended to supplement Column E, "Ethnic Group", and to enable the Indo-Mauritian group to be subdivided.

(as quoted in Stein 1986: 268)

In the 2000 census, the question relating to ancestral languages is entitled 'linguistic group' and shows no explicit connection to ethnic identity. Whether this question is still thought of as being tied to ethnicity will be discussed below.

If questions regarding ancestral languages seem to have become more objective, questions related to the language usually spoken at home have not been modified. Though the question targets only the 'language usually or most often spoken by the person in his/her home', reports of two languages were also recorded. However, even in the home environment, some Mauritians use more than two languages with family members. For instance, in an extended family home, a child may speak Creole with his/her parents, Bhojpuri with his/her grandparents and French with his/her siblings. Moreover, since this question is restricted to the family domain, it does not account for widespread multilingualism outside the home. Although the census question does not provide a complete and accurate picture of multilingualism within the Mauritian home, it shows that the language most often spoken in Mauritian homes is varied and can range from Creole to Urdu, for instance.

Finally, the explicit remark that Creole and Bhojpuri should be considered as languages in the census reflects current negative attitudes towards these languages and suggests that, in everyday life, some respondents do not consider these two varieties as fully-fledged languages. Given these negative attitudes, we might expect under-reporting for the use of Creole and Bhojpuri.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Linguistic group

Table 1 lists numbers of responses in column 17 of the census.

| Languages | Number (Total = 1,143.069 | % |
|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 798 | 0.07 |
| Bhojpuri | 361,184 | 31.60 |
| Chinese languages | 22,606 | 1.98 |
| Creole | 420,344 | 36.78 |
| English | 1,073 | 0.09 |
| French | 21,090 | 1.85 |
| Hindi | 35,757 | 3.13 |
| Marathi | 16,587 | 1.45 |
| Tamil | 44,724 | 3.91 |
| Telegu | 18,793 | 1.64 |
| Urdu | 34,096 | 2.98 |
| Other and not stated | 166,017 | 14.52 |

Table1. Population by language of forefathers

More than 36% of the population report Creole as their ancestral language. We would expect only the Creoles and some Mulattos to report Creole as their ancestral language, Indo-and Sino-Mauritians to report Asian languages and Franco-Mauritians to claim French as their ancestral language (cf. Fig. 1). The Creoles and the Mulattos make up less than 29% of the total population. Yet 36.8% of the population claim that Creole is their ancestral language. Mauritians, other than creoles and mulattos, have therefore also reported Creole as their ancestral language.

Given that ancestral languages act as markers of ethnicity as discussed above, it seems that some Mauritians are (re-)negotiating their ethnic identity through language. Creole has supplanted the original ancestral language of these Mauritians. For example, a comparison between the 1983 and 2000 censuses shows a significant decrease in the reports of Indian languages (with the exception of Bhojpuri) as ancestral languages: from 65% to 47% (Stein 1986). It is possible that some of the remaining 18% have opted for Creole as their ancestral language. Unlike the Mauritians who still report Asian or European varieties as their ancestral languages, these Mauritians identify with a relatively recent past. Their ancestry is a couple of centuries old, while that of most Indo-, Sino- and Franco- Mauritians dates back to the pre-migration days. The data in Table 1 suggest that Creole is gaining acceptance as an ancestral language.

Moreover, Asian languages are still claimed as ancestral languages by a large segment of the Mauritian population. Given that Mauritians use languages as a means to construct and/or assert their ethnic identity, the relatively substantial presence of Indian languages (47%) in Table 1 is noteworthy. It is clear from the census reports that many Indo- and Sino-Mauritians generally see their history, at least their linguistic history, in terms of their Asian heritage. That is, many Indo- and Sino-Mauritians still strongly identify with Asian culture and languages.

The two prestigious colonial languages, English and French, are also reported as ancestral languages. 1.85% and 0.09% of the population claim French and English, respectively, as the language of their forefathers. Since French is associated with the Franco-Mauritians (Baggioni & Robillard 1990, Eriksen 1998), it is likely that most of the people who claim French as their ancestral language are from the Franco-Mauritian group. We can also expect members of the Coloured Population who have merged into the Franco-Mauritian group, or who aspire to do so, to have reported French as their ancestral language.

Furthermore, the small percentage of people who reported English as their ancestral language is to be expected. Relatively few British people settled on Mauritius (Toussaint 1972). Also, some of the British who stayed on the island assimilated to the French culture and way of life (Beaton 1859, Stein 1982).

The presence of Arabic in Table 1 is unexpected and needs to be explored. In his book *The Muslims of Mauritius*, Emrith (1967, as quoted in Eriksen 1998) makes no mention of Arabic. Yet, we find that 798 Mauritians claim that Arabic is their ancestral language. As a minority group, some Muslims feel threatened by the majority Hindus (Hollup 1996). Therefore, it is possible that by claiming that Arabic (instead of Bhojpuri) is their ancestral language, they are distancing themselves from the Indian subcontinent. Language is used by these Muslims as an ideological tool to assert themselves and distinguish themselves from the other Indo-Mauritian groups. Here, ancestry seems to be defined using religious rather than ethnic criteria[4].

These findings raise some interesting questions: after how many generations does a group change its allegiance to a given ancestral language (Eriksen 1998)? For instance, when will the Indo-Mauritian population identify itself more strongly with a Mauritian culture and history than with an Indian one? Does the language have to cease being spoken in the home?

## 3.2 Language usually or most often spoken in the home

### 3.2.1 Linguistic group vs language spoken in the home

Given the linguistic situation of Mauritius and language attitudes of Mauritians, the following tendencies would be expected:

1. An increase in reports of Creole as it is the language most extensively used by Mauritians;

2. A decrease in the mentions of Asian languages which are mostly associated with ethnicity and/or religion and are rarely used as tools of communication;

3. An increase in reports of French and English, the languages of upward social mobility.

### 3.2.2 Responses

Table 2 below summarises the findings for column 18. Table 3 shows the resident population by language of forefathers and language spoken at home.

| Languages | Number (Total = 1,143,069) | % |
|---|---|---|
| Bhojpuri | 142,385 | 12.46 |
| Chinese languages | 8,736 | 0.76 |
| Creole | 791,465 | 69.24 |
| English | 3,505 | 0.31 |
| French | 39,827 | 3.44 |
| Hindi | 7,245 | 0.63 |
| Marathi | 1,888 | 0.17 |
| Tamil | 3,622 | 0.32 |
| Telegu | 2,169 | 0.19 |
| Urdu | 1,789 | 0.16 |
| Other and not stated | 140,438 | 12.29 |

Table 2. Population by language spoken at home

| Language of forefathers | Total | Language usually spoken at home | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Bhojpuri | Chinese languages | Creole | English | French | Hindi | Marathi | Tamil | Telegu | Urdu | Other and N. stated |
| | 1,143,069 | 142,385 | 8,736 | 791,465 | 3,505 | 39,827 | 7,245 | 1,888 | 3,622 | 2,169 | 1,789 | 140,438 |
| Arabic | 798 | 2 | - | 636 | 5 | 20 | - | - | - | - | 26 | 109 |
| Bhojpuri | 361,184 | 126,700 | 34 | 187,074 | 349 | 1,137 | 2,605 | 9 | 19 | 21 | 134 | 43,102 |
| Chinese languages | 22,606 | 2 | 8,430 | 11,005 | 125 | 899 | - | - | - | - | - | 2,145 |
| Creole | 420,344 | 547 | 100 | 389,523 | 393 | 10,428 | 56 | 5 | 22 | 8 | 61 | 19,201 |
| English | 1,073 | - | 1 | 88 | 746 | 119 | 7 | - | 2 | - | - | 110 |
| French | 21,990 | 4 | 4 | 1,437 | 151 | 17,837 | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | 1,653 |
| Hindi | 35,757 | 5,082 | 7 | 20,945 | 280 | 511 | 3,465 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5,450 |
| Marathi | 10,587 | 184 | - | 12,778 | 40 | 82 | 8 | 1,778 | - | - | - | 1,717 |
| Tamil | 44,724 | 117 | 6 | 36,639 | 137 | 546 | 11 | 1 | 3,442 | 2 | - | 3,823 |
| Telegu | 18,793 | 241 | - | 13,170 | 32 | 199 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 2,065 | - | 3,070 |
| Urdu | 34,096 | 302 | 7 | 29,325 | 185 | 381 | 50 | - | - | - | 1,356 | 2,490 |
| Other and not stated | 166,017 | 9,204 | 147 | 88,845 | 1,062 | 7,668 | 1,032 | 85 | 127 | 69 | 210 | 57,568 |

Table 3. Population by language of forefather and language spoken at home

A comparison between Tables 1 and 2 shows a significant increase for Creole. While only a third of the population report Creole as their ancestral language, more than two thirds claim that Creole is the language that they usually speak at home. Even though the number of Mauritians who report using Creole at home is high, it is still not an accurate representation of the number of Creole speakers at home. It has been observed by linguists and some members of the general public that around 80% of the children who join nursery school have mostly been exposed to Creole (Ah Nee 2002, Virahsawmy 2002). This implies that in more than three-quarters of Mauritian homes, Creole is the language most often spoken. The reported 69% of the census is, therefore, an underestimate of the actual extensive use of Creole in the home. This perceived under-reporting could be due to the fact that reports of two languages have been excluded in this study (cf. Section 2).

92.7% of the people who report Creole as their ancestral language use it in their home. 2.5% usually speak French at home. Using French in the home suggests an improvement in social status. It is possible that the people who claim Creole as their ancestral language and French as the language usually spoken are part of the Coloured Population. These people do not reject their creole ancestry – as suggested by their


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report of Creole as ancestral language – but, at the same time, aspire to a movement up the social ladder.

Upward social mobility is also suggested in the responses of people who report Creole as their ancestral language and English as the language of the home. These 393 respondents report that their ancestors used Creole but that they now speak English. The use of English suggests a high level of education and consequently, a middle-class or upper-class status.

The use of Asian languages by those who claim Creole as their ancestral language is unexpected. Since Asian languages are mostly markers of identity and rarely used in everyday interactions, it is difficult to explain their presence in cases where Creole is reported as the ancestral language. The reverse would be expected.

It is indeed the case that where Asian languages are reported as ancestral languages, Creole becomes the language usually spoken at home. In these cases, the Asian languages clearly function as markers of ethnicity and Creole as a commonly spoken language. Asian languages are used in a limited number of households, with each of these households speaking mostly its own reported ancestral Asian language.

Bhojpuri differs from the other Asian languages in that it is usually spoken in the home by more than 10% of the total population. Most of the people who usually/most often speak Bhojpuri at home claim to have an Asian variety as their ancestral language. However, almost 50% of those who indicate that Bhojpuri is their ancestral language usually speak Creole at home. It has been claimed that Creole is taking over domains where Bhojpuri and other ancestral languages were used, e.g., the home (Stein 1982). This is confirmed in the 2000 census figures.

Furthermore, Creole and Bhojpuri are thought to be in a diglossic situation where Creole is the High variety and Bhojpuri is the Low one (Chaudenson 1989). Although Table 2 does not confirm this observation, it shows that Bhojpuri has become more of an emblem of ancestry than a language of everyday interaction. Creole is clearly in an opposite situation: it is used by more than 69% at home while it is the ancestral language of only 39.8% of the population.

Some general tendencies can be found and predictions made from the above figures. In the next section, the tendencies and predictions are discussed.

## 4. Tendencies and predictions

Tables 1 and 2 show that the Asian languages in Mauritius function mainly as ancestral languages. The ancestral languages, with the exception of Bhojpuri, are used by a small segment of the population in the home. Since ancestral languages function mainly as in-group languages, their use is very limited outside the home. It can, therefore, be predicted that Asian languages will soon function exclusively as symbols of culture, personal history and/or religion rather than spoken languages in Mauritius. It is difficult to predict whether even their status as ancestral languages will be taken over by Creole, French or English. Those who report using ancestral languages in the home could do so for ideological purposes. Language issues are charged with cultural and political meaning in Mauritius (Miles 2000). Minority groups may feel that by reporting the use

of their ancestral language in the home, they are asserting themselves and preserving their culture.

French and English are acquiring a new dimension as languages of the home. This is to be expected as these are the languages of upward social mobility. French is the native tongue of the Franco-Mauritians but, as Table 3 suggests, has also become that of some Afro-, Sino- and Indo-Mauritians. Since French is widely used in the school system, an increasing number of parents are using this language at home so that their children can be exposed to it from a very early age (Baggioni & Robillard 1990).

English is a neutral language in that it is not associated with any ethnic or religious group on the island (section 1.3). The literature suggests that the use of English is restricted to formal domains. However, the census reports show that 0.3% of the population do speak English in the home. More people claim to use English in the home than to have it as their ancestral language. Access to English is mostly through the school system and mastery of English only comes after completion of college. The people who speak English at home must, therefore, have had access to at least secondary schooling. It seems reasonable to claim that some parents choose to speak English at home so that their children can acquire the language from a very early age and hence have a headstart at school – as has been observed for French.

The high figures for Creole in the census tables are interesting. Even though its use is thought to be under-reported (69% in the census tables in comparison with the observed 80% by Ah Nee 2002 and Virahsawmy 2002), its position as the language most often used in the home cannot be challenged by any of the other languages. Since Creole is taking over a domain where ancestral languages used to be spoken, it is no longer competing with the latter as the language of the home but with English and French. Like French, therefore, Creole is acquiring a new dimension in addition to its role as a marker of ethnicity.

Furthermore, all these trends suggest changes in language attitudes, especially attitudes to Creole and Bhojpuri. It has been argued that Bhojpuri "is widely spoken in Mauritius but is not claimed as a cultural indicator" (Moorghen & Domingue 1982: 54). The significant presence of Bhojpuri in Table 1 shows that for many Mauritians, Bhojpuri functions as an ancestral language. In fact, the 2000 census Figures (Tables 1 and 2) depict Bhojpuri more as a cultural indicator than as a vernacular language extensively used in everyday interactions. That is, more people report having Bhojpuri as an ancestral language than actually using it at home.

Also, Creole is transcending ethnic and social barriers and is used by people of various ethnic and social backgrounds. A respondent's ethnicity and religion can partly be deduced on the basis of his/ her ancestral language. Table 3 clearly indicates that everyday use of Creole is not restricted to specific groups and it is used by people who claim to have European and Asian varieties as their ancestral languages. This tendency suggests that Creole is gaining acceptance as the language of everyday interactions in the Mauritian home. Mauritians, therefore, seem to have accepted Creole, and also Bhojpuri, as fully fledged languages, and come to terms with the idea that these two languages can act as markers of ethnicity, be used in the home and be reported as being used. This acknowledgement enhances the status of these two varieties as "this is not just de facto acceptance, but rather acceptance in the minds of the speaker as well" (Stein 1986: 268).

However, that Creole is accepted in the home does not mean that it can be recognised as a national language. It still tends to be perceived as a marker of Creole identity and culture (Eriksen 1998). Interestingly, therefore, Mauritians admit to using Creole in their home, but might not be ready to see its use institutionalised. We can, therefore, expect attitudes towards Creole to differ with respect to domains of use.

Finally, the census figures show a clear awareness of the differences between ancestral language and language usually/most often used at home. Mauritians are conscious of their cultural past and language is an important way for them to assert their ethnic identity in this multiethnic nation. Also, they still seem to relate the question about ancestral language to their ethnic origins. Whereas some years ago the language of forefathers coincided with the language used at home (Stein 1982), nowadays the language of forefathers and language used at home can be distinguished in most cases. For instance, Asian languages are mainly 'language of forefathers' while Creole is mostly the 'language usually spoken at home'.

## 5. Further research

In the above paragraphs, only the general tendencies and unexpected findings observed in the language tables are discussed. Many variables, such as gender, level of education, place of residence and literacy, can help to account for these tendencies and influence responses to questions regarding 'linguistic group' and 'language usually spoken'. The effect of these variables needs to be investigated so that a better understanding of the linguistic situation in Mauritius can be obtained.

Finally, to understand how language attitudes are changing in Mauritius, current trends found in the 2000 population census have to be compared with previous censuses. For example, an increase in reports of Creole as the language of forefathers and language usually spoken at home can be observed from the 1983 and 2000 censuses: from 29% to 36.8% for the language of forefathers and from 54% to 69.2% for language usually spoken. Also, while in 1972 and 1983 0.3% and 0.2% of the population, respectively, claimed that English was their ancestral language, only 0.09% of the population did so in 2000. However, more people claimed to use English in the home in 2000 than in 1972 and 1983. How do these figures relate to ongoing language change in Mauritius? Do they reflect a change in language attitudes? How have such changes affected national language policies? A comparative analysis of these figures can provide answers to such questions and also give us an interesting insight into linguistic change in this creole-speaking nation.

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## Notes

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[1] In Mauritius, ethnicity is associated with "family origins, language, religion, physical appearance (phenotype) and/or lifestyle" (Eriksen 1998: 49).

[2] Key: In italics are the languages associated with the respective ethnic/religious group, i.e., the ancestral language of each group.

[3] Figures for the language Tables and a specimen questionnaire were obtained from the *Central Statistical Office* website. Columns 17–19 refer to the numbering system found on the questionnaire.

[4] Had these Mauritians asserted their identity along ethnic criteria, they would probably have quoted Bhojpuri or Urdu as their ancestral language(s). Arabic, unlike Bhojpuri and Urdu, has no direct link with the cultural and ethnic origins of the Mauritian Muslims. To the Mauritian Muslim, Arabic is only the language of the Quran and of obligatory prayer, that is, a language that can enable them to define their religious identity.

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